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THE NATION

DECEMBER 24, 1977 *60 cents*

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Milton Viorst
THE ISRAELIS WATCH BEGIN
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LIVES OF THE POETS
Delmore Schwartz and Frank O'Hara

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LETTERS

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New York City

Arnold S. Kohen's "The Cruel Case of Indonesia" [*The Nation*, Nov. 26] is a very useful account of the deplorable human rights situation in that country. The information Mr. Kohen presented is a poignant reminder to us all of the inconsistency of the Carter administration's implementation of the International Security Assistance and Arms Control Act of 1976 (Title III, Section 502b) which clearly states: ". . . a principal goal of the foreign policy of the United States is to promote the increased observance of internationally recognized human rights by all countries . . . no security assistance may be provided to any country the government of which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights. . . ."

There is an absence of information provided to the American public by the Department of State explaining what it is or is not doing concerning the human rights provisions of official U.S. foreign policy. . . . This leaves American citizenry . . . in serious doubt as to the sincerity of our present government's commitment to its publicly announced foreign policy goals.

John Newmann

identity problem

Atlanta, Ga.

In his zeal to find pejorative descriptions for the Calorie Control Council, David A. Rothman ["Phony Consumer Groups," *The Nation*, Sept. 17] accuses the Calorie Control Council of posing as a consumer group as a result of ads it published in the public debate over a proposed FDA ban on saccharin. In fact, the Calorie Control Council . . . has regularly identified itself for a decade as an international organization of manufacturers and suppliers of diet foods and beverages. We make no apology for our position in opposition to the proposed FDA ban on saccharin, a view which is upheld by a significant part of the scientific and medical community.

Mr. Rothman himself notes that a "boring" press release in 1976 described the Calorie Control Council as an association of manufacturers and suppliers. That press release was issued well ahead of the March 1977 advertisements about which he waxes so angrily.

There has been no attempt by the Calorie Control Council to mask its identity or its position on the proposed saccharin ban. The fact is, our ads simply invited Americans to write their Congressmen; and they did—in record numbers. Why? Because a lot of American citizens, including diabetics and the obese, felt justifiably threatened by this proposed federal action based on arbitrary interpretation of incomplete science.

In short, a substantial number of Americans agreed with our position and took action in their own interest. If Mr. Rothman wishes to argue the science concerning saccharin, we would welcome such discussion, for that—not innuendo—has been the basis of our work.

Robert H. Kellen, President

still on top

Washington, D.C.

My friend Marc Levinson's "AFSCME: Public Employees in Trouble" [*The Nation*, Sept. 10] . . . does a disservice to your readers by suggesting that the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees was "on top of the world" just two years ago but is entirely "on the defensive" now.

Two years ago . . . New York City was laying off some

(*Continued on page 685*)

EDITORIALS

The Acceptance Front

Prime Minister Begin has flown to Washington to hold the President's hand, or perhaps twist his arm. He made this flight even as the airspace of the Middle East was filled with the nervous crisscrossing of Arab diplomats trying to frustrate or foster the consequences of Sadat's Jerusalem initiative.

Meanwhile, the United States has put a *safety net* under the *bridge* over the *chasm* called Cairo Failure. We did this, in the mixed-metaphorical lingo of statesmen and journalists, as all the players in the game of Middle Eastern Peace *cut the cards* and took the first halting *steps* down a *road* we are trying to *pave* with our discreet good intentions, watching out for *wedges* that might *split* them as they *step* through the *mine field*.

But no combination of figures of speech can express the complexities and confusions of what is happening out there as Sadat's Cairo conference begins. What, for instance, has happened to our old friend *momentum*? Do we miss the *shuttle*? In whose *court*, really, is the *ball*?

We would hazard only one guess. It is that unless the Israeli Government soon dares to take a risk that could be called initiative, Sadat's bold enterprise will start to collapse.

It was altogether predictable that the rejectionist states, encouraged by Moscow, would act as they have; the only news in the Syria-Iraq-Libya-Algeria-South Yemen meeting was that it took such lengthy wrangling among them to try to produce their common stance (which Iraq rejected).

But what of the Acceptance Front, as it just might be called? Is it sensible to think that Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia might have sent representatives to Cairo if Israel had made one noticeable gesture toward the accommodation Sadat is evidently seeking? There are those, even in Israel, who think so, as Milton Viorst's article in this issue makes clear.

It is probably wise for all of us, including even the Secretary of State on his energetic travels, to admit that we are seeing things in the Middle East through a very dark glass. The crosscurrents in that region make for murky waters even when the air is calm; they become impenetrable when the winds of passionate Arab feelings whip them. Take the following sentences from Brzezinski during a television interview (December 11): "Our objective has been movement toward a settlement. Geneva is a means toward that objective. If that means can serve that objective well, it will be used. If that objective can be approached through other steps, those steps will be pursued." Leaving aside the obscurities of step-pursual, the President's National Security Adviser has here uttered a perfect sibyllinity. Although that is much better in these circumstances than tactless clarity, administration spokesmen, in a commendable effort to keep their feet out of their mouths, have planted them solidly in the air. It is hard to know what the United States is really doing.

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We want "a comprehensive settlement," Vance keeps saying. In Moscow that phrase translates as "Geneva." In Washington's reading, it means that Cairo can be "an important step forward" toward—well, toward Geneva, but not necessarily so. Might Cairo produce its own "concentric circles," as one diplomat put it, into which the nonrejectionists could gradually be drawn?

Even Syria might be forced into those circles by the powerful attraction of an arrangement at Cairo which included Israel's agreement to withdraw from large parts of the occupied territory. Jordan and Saudi Arabia would be strongly affected by its magnetism. The hard line would soften. Moscow might be perceived as a mere troublemaker, interested in strategic games of its own, not in the fate of the Arab millions.

The draw of such an attractive magnet depends upon the will and courage of Israel. That embattled nation must be made to feel that territorial concessions will be paid for in the most valuable currency of all—genuine, guaranteed acceptance of its right to exist among equals. Acceptance is the key word. Somehow it must become current both in Israel and in most of the Arab world. The minting has begun in Cairo and it must be encouraged by every means.

The Tariff Hammer

"We are committed to minimize trade restrictions, to take into account the specific trade problems of developing countries, and to provide special and more favorable treatment where feasible and appropriate." Those pledges —all carefully qualified—come from President Carter's speech before the Organization of American States on Pan-American day in April, a speech that outlined the administration's basic policy toward Latin America. Coupled with Carter's promise that relations with our Latin neighbors would be given a high priority during his term of office, the OAS speech raised hopes that change might be forthcoming where it counts: in the realm of trade, investment and technology transfer.

Two recent decisions go a long way toward dashing that hope. On November 9 it was announced that American tariffs on sugar would rise by 50 percent, and that an additional "import fee" would be imposed. The move was designed to protect American sugar producers, and is expected to cost Latin American exporters some $60 million a year. It is not an immense sum—and in fact it was the insult more than the injury that outraged the Latins. In his OAS speech, Carter had said regarding American international economic policy: "When major decisions are taken in these areas we will consult with you." The United States in 1970 also helped to create an OAS group known as CECON (Special Committee on Consultation and Negotiation), one of whose rules states unequivocally: "Prior consultation shall be held before the United States adopts measures which might adversely affect imports from the Latin American countries." Yet the sugar tariff increase came as a surprise to the Latins.

Then, in early December, the United States signed a new trade agreement with Mexico, an agreement that had grown out of the 105-nation talks on trade under-

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way in Geneva since 1975. One goal of the talks was to reverse the decline in the Third World's terms of trade with the industrialized West—a goal Carter has supported verbally, though his administration has been extremely reluctant to make real concessions. The trade agreement with Mexico will reduce tariffs on the U.S. imports from Mexico (worth about $63 million last year). In return, Mexico reduced tariffs on American goods (worth about $36 million). The deal would seem to favor Mexico, but its significance is just the reverse. By signing a bilateral agreement with the United States, Mexico broke ranks with the other developing countries which demand *multilateral* deals that will lower First World tariffs *without reciprocal Third World reductions.* Other industrialized countries have agreed to that demand, at least in theory. The United States alone has insisted on mutual concessions.

Other signs bode ill for reform of North-South terms of trade. Talks aimed at establishing a "common fund" to finance buffer stocks of essential commodities have once again collapsed. Brazilian producers of textiles and leather goods are being shut out of American markets by higher tariffs. And the real victims of the crisis in the Western steel industry will probably be Third World producers who were counting on increased exports of steel to finance their growth.

With protectionist sentiment on the rise at home, President Carter faces painful economic choices. Naturally, he finds it easy to forget his promises to those distant and poverty-stricken peoples whose raw materials and cheap labor have contributed so much to our prosperity. In the short run that decision makes political sense—the Brazilians, after all, will not vote for or against him in 1980. But the price of stonewalling the Third World today may be catastrophe tomorrow. It would be far better to make concessions that would help ease the economic pinch in those countries, and to support generously—with relocation benefits, retraining programs, and federal public works jobs when necessary—the American workers and communities adversely affected by lowered barriers to imports.

Controversial Ditch

As 1977 draws to its close it is possible to imagine that next year the U.S. Senate may dare to face the specter of the Panama Canal treaties. (The Right calls that waterway "The American Canal," but let's stick with the familiar name—after all, it goes through some geography labeled "Panama" and, anyway, "American" sounds rather international.)

We all remember—or have we already forgotten?—the pompous show President Carter put on in September to hail an agreement that would "turn the Canal over" to Panama on the eve of the next millennium. The quotes are necessary because the dirty little secret of the two treaties negotiated over thirteen years is that the United States retains in perpetuity the right to "protect" access to this oceanic link. That is, it does not become, twenty-two years from now, the property of Panama; it becomes an indescribable something in international law which two quite unequal "powers," Panama and the United States, have an equal right to defend against all comers.

Since that giant celebration in Washington, almost nothing has been heard of the Panama treaties. Hardly had the parade of Latin American dictators left Washington with their squads of bodyguards when the Senate's Majority Leader, Robert Byrd, told Carter his treaties had not a chance to be ratified until at least 1978—that there just was nowhere to be found a majority of two-thirds in the Senate to go along with an instrument often called a "giveaway"—a pejorative term transferred from the world of domestic welfare. The two treaties were promptly installed on the legislature's back burner.

There were developments elsewhere, nonetheless. Panama held a referendum in October in which the voters of that country gave the treaties a favorable nod by a large majority. In the United States, citizens' committees were established on both sides of the issue. It is ridiculous to say that they represented a split defined as Right-Left, given the extreme respectability and conformity of the supporters of ratification. Still, the Right was overwhelmingly represented among the opponents, ranging from the merely timid to the outright crazy.

The computers that obey Richard Viguerie and his rich clients hummed and dispatched millions of letters to people who might contribute funds and patriotic letters to Congress, aimed at keeping an American sovereignty in Panama that we have possessed only in fact, not law. On a more modest and less skilled scale the establishmentarians tried their hands at rallying support for the treaties. The question almost disappeared from the press, except for an occasional fulmination against cowardice, abandonment and the decline of national nerve exemplified by the proposed new arrangement about the Canal. It was not very widely noted when *The Nation* (October 22) came out editorially against the treaties on the grounds that they would simply perpetuate an antique quasi-colonial arrangement, in slightly different garb, and that something much more rapid and generous was needed, regardless of the alleged nationalistic exigencies of American politics, which were said to dictate that this was the best we could do.

We said "needed" partly because we do not believe that this long drawn-out U.S. "withdrawal" will convince the Latin Americans that it is any such thing. Therefore it will not work, pragmatically, as they say. It will cause trouble and bring about resistance to our designs in the Southern Hemisphere. The likely response of any imaginable U.S. Government to that reaction has been well summed up by William F. Buckley Jr., a supporter of the Panama treaties who should give us pause. He writes that, "The continued authority of the United States to guarantee safe passage is assured—provided we elect a President willing to use his powers as Commander in Chief." The big stick forever, in other words.

We are still a few weeks away from the actual Senate debate, and these remarks are merely cautionary. We are in for an extremely revealing discussion of the fantasies about American power and on the limits of decent national behavior that still prevail in our representative bodies. It is hard to predict the outcome of that debate, but we should brace ourselves for a certain disillusionment about the sense and seriousness of the national purpose.

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South Africa: Post-Diplomatic Options

Andrew Silk

American response to the extraordinary events which have shaken South Africa in the last few months has been diplomatically correct but almost hollow in substance. The Carter administration is not prepared to support the extremely stiff measures which might shake the white regime into talking with the black majority.

The attendance of Ambassador Donald McHenry, Andrew Young's deputy, at the funeral of the black leader, Steve Biko, helped forestall the smear campaign initiated by the South African Minister of Justice James Kruger to label the dead man a "terrorist." The recall of the American Ambassador William Bowdler kept the white regime from minimizing the importance of the crackdown on black and and white dissidents. The statement by Under Secretary of State Richard Moose that he was appalled both by the evidence and the verdict in the Biko inquest was appropriate and consistent with U.S. protests against the gross violations of human rights in Russia, Uganda and elsewhere. The refusal to recognize the new "homeland" of Bophutatswana, which is cut into six pieces within South Africa, made clear Washington's contempt for the patent dishonesty of Vorster's political dealings with the black majority.

These firm positions, however, have been accompanied by only two actions. U.N. Ambassador Young supported a U.N. resolution imposing an arms embargo on South Africa, and America itself, which stopped selling weapons to Pretoria in 1962, has now also banned the sale of "gray" technology—certain airplane parts and other materiel which could be used for military purposes.

Neither of these measures has seriously damaged the South African defense force or white morale. Indeed, the immediate effect has been to spur production at the state-owned military corporation, Armscor, to compensate for the loss of French and Israeli arms, and to intensify the spirit of white defiance. Two days after the embargo was passed by the Security Council, the Pretoria government imposed emergency legislation authorizing it to order both national and foreign-owned firms into war-related production at any time. The ruling National Party won overwhelming support in the November elections by "running against Washington."

The Carter administration, without Congressional approval, could have taken two further steps which might have dampened white chauvinism and exposed more explicitly South Africa's economic vulnerability. It could have canceled export/import investment credits to American firms in South Africa, and it could have shifted its policy toward such investment from neutrality to discouragement. Both these steps were favored by Sen. Dick Clark, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs.

Neither move was taken because it seems Washington still has hopes that economic growth within South Africa will lead to racial concessions. The administration has not decided whether its pressure should be designed to increase the influence of more liberal forces within the ruling party, or whether it should try to cripple the South African economy and force change by making the whites hostages to international markets and internal black demands. It is reluctant to move toward an economic boycott because it does not think that such a boycott would be effective or possible in the near future.

For although the size of American investment in South Africa is relatively small—$1.7 billion, or a little more than 1 percent of all our investment abroad—the cost of supporting an international boycott would be much greater. All of southern Africa is tied closely to the South African economy. The small country of Lesotho exports almost half its work force into the Republic; the hard currency with which Mozambique pays its debts comes almost exclusively from South African sources—the use of the port at Maputo, of the hydroelectric dam at Cabora Bassa, and returns from Mozambiquans working in South African gold mines. Any embargo capable of depressing the South African economy could seriously disrupt other surrounding black states as well.

But aside from the cost, an embargo against South Africa would not be supported in Congress. Whatever our practice, commitment to free trade is an American dogma—particularly toward a country where virtually every major American corporation has some investment, and where such an embargo could necessitate the bailing out of a country such as Mozambique which has strong ties to Russia. Beyond this, the United States is still looking to South Africa for help in negotiating a transition to black rule in Namibia and Rhodesia.

Until such time, then, as sanctions become a real possibility in American and international politics, there is not much more that can be done directly to stop apartheid. However, this should not delude people into thinking that investment can still be a liberalizing influence, encouraging relaxation of racial restrictions and an extension of real political power to the blacks. If for no other reason, the Carter administration should withdraw the investment tax credits to help dispel illusions. For all the evidence so far indicates that the hard-liners are becoming more powerful as a result of gradual pressure. They are seizing the time that is left to construct a siege economy and to persuade whites that they can tough out the coming struggle.

Only in a political and economic crisis so deep that the country lost faith in Vorster and his Cabinet would the nation conceivably turn to those whites who are willing to consider a true reform of South African society.

Such a crisis would probably be set in motion more by internal forces than by those from outside. In that event, American support for sanctions might be effective. But for the United States to take that step, the debate over South African policy would have to move beyond the foreign affairs analysts and become a factor in domestic politics. If American blacks tied themselves to the black South African cause as American Jews have tied themselves to Israel, the pressure on South Africa could at the right moment become overwhelming. □

Andrew Silk was a reporter on The Pretoria News *and the* Rand Daily Mail *in 1974. He recently returned from ten months in South Africa as a fellow of the Thomas Watson Foundation.*

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THE BIG COP-OUT

CARTER AND THE VETERANS

BARRY W. LYNN

Last summer the Veterans of Foreign Wars passed a resolution demanding that the federal government prohibit the sale of souvenirs made in Japan at the Pearl Harbor historical site. They also declared January 21, 1977, the "Second Day of Infamy" because on that date President Carter pardoned "draft dodgers" of the war in Vietnam. Given their long memories, it is little wonder that old-line veterans' organizations and their conservative Congressional cohorts supported a six-month attempt to undercut Carter's programs to "heal the wounds of war." What is surprising, though, is the active help they got from liberal Sen. Alan Cranston (D., Calif.) and the remarkably weak support Carter gave to his own efforts.

Carter's campaign pledge to pardon draft resisters was widely known long before the election. However, Sen. James Allen (D., Ala.) attempted during the first three weeks of January to have passed a "sense of the Senate" resolution insisting that Carter not act. Since passage seemed imminent, Carter proclaimed the pardon on his first day in office to avoid the embarrassment of acting after the Senate had spoken in opposition. The pardon was announced without official fanfare by Press Secretary Jody Powell, with Carter nowhere in sight. (Gerald Ford had created his clemency program on national television.) Powell also said that the Defense Department would "study" the problem of "deserters" and other "military offenders."

The January pardon covered virtually all violators or possible violators of the draft laws from August 4, 1964 (the Tonkin Gulf resolution) to March 28, 1973 (the day the last combat troops left Vietnam). The 9,700 men convicted of draft-law violations could receive a pardon that would restore lost federal civil rights. Another 4,000, under indictment or investigation for draft-law violation, simply had their cases automatically terminated. They were "amnestied."

The "pardon" also foreclosed possible prosecution against 100,000 or more men who, from principle or ignorance, had never registered for the draft. Relief was also accorded to individuals affected by an obscure sub-subsection of the Immigration and Nationality Act which the Nixon administration had resurrected. A former American could be designated an "undesirable alien" and permanently barred from even visiting the United States, if the Immigration and Naturalization Service found he had acquired foreign citizenship to "avoid or evade military service or training." The Executive Order accompanying the pardon ordered that any draft resister covered by this statute could now "be permitted as any other alien to re-enter the United States." A President lacks the constitutional authority to restore citizenship, but at least a resister with new nationality could now visit or live in the United States and reapply for citizenship. The only persons excluded from the pardon were several hundred, mainly religious conscientious objectors, who were convicted of draft resistance before the Tonkin Gulf resolution, and any persons guilty of force or violence in connection with violations.

Problems arose the day after the pardon announcement. One resister's grandmother had died the day previous. He wanted to go home to Florida, and called me for advice. Clearly pardoned for draft evasion, he faced a separate federal indictment for jumping bail. Robert Lipshutz, counsel to the President, worked on the case that afternoon, and decided that the administration's policy would be to dismiss all minor charges related to draft evasion. This was to be the only amnesty-related issue resolved expeditiously by the White House.

Despite Lipshutz's decision, collateral charges were not always dropped immediately. Intransigent Republican U.S. Attorneys found law violations that could be charged along with draft evasion to delay dismissals. One of them even charged a resister with theft of government documents because he had walked out of an induction center with blank medical forms he had been asked to fill out. It was mid-July before all cases were dismissed. Only one man was found ineligible because of violence —he had set fire to his draft board the day he refused induction.

The pardon affected for the most part white, middle-class and articulate war resisters. Nothing had been done for at-large military absentees ("deserters") or for the more than 450,000 veterans of Vietnam who were given other than fully honorable discharges from the 1964-73 period. These veterans were disproportionately from minority groups, Carter's proclaimed special constituency.

The discharges were of several kinds: 32,000 "dishonorable" and "bad conduct" discharges were issued through formal courts-martial; another 425,000 "undesirable" and "general" discharges were granted administratively, with no hearing in most cases and with minimal due process protections even when hearings were held (no verbatim transcripts, no confrontation with hostile witnesses). The discharges were rarely given for serious crimes, but usually for absence, disobedience, political activism and trivial noncriminal misdemeanors related to an unwillingness to adjust to military life. All "bad" discharges decrease employability; "undesirables" and those decided by court-martial deny veterans' benefits unless they are upgraded.

The military had been giving some "study" to the situation of AWOLs and bearers of "bad" discharges. Houston lawyer David Berg, the member of Carter's transition team who dealt with amnesty, had initially been adamantly against any program for deserters, but changed his view. He even convinced top adviser Stuart Eizenstat

Barry Lynn is a lobbyist in Washington for the Office for Church in Society of the United Church of Christ.

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to urge Carter that he not only remove deserters from legal jeopardy but also upgrade all administrative "bad" discharges. The economic advisers for the transition team had assessed the effect of paying Veterans Administration benefits to 160,000 previously "undesirably" discharged veterans. Their conclusion was that, even if every veteran got benefits, it would only spur the economy, since the money would quickly go into colleges, health care and housing.

The real obstacle to any resolution for AWOLs and the "less than honorables" was political. Polls after the pardon showed 45 percent for, 45 percent against, and "deserters" were a good deal less popular even than resisters. One Carter aide told me, though, that "deserters are just a bigger public relations problem."

On March 28, 1977, the Defense Department finally and reluctantly announced its program. Once again, Carter himself participated not at all in this important and controversial announcement that came so early in his administration. The program was open to all 4,000 noncombat-zone deserters still at large from the period of 1963-73, and to the 425,000 veterans with "general" or "undesirable" discharges issued during those years. Although it could not be mistaken for an amnesty, it did contain some surprisingly liberal features and practical machinery for implementation. Toll-free numbers were established, where deserters and veterans could call to check on their eligibility. If an eligible deserter was outside the country, he would receive a letter permitting him to cross the border. Processing would take no more than a few days, and the individual would be given an "undesirable" discharge which would then automatically be considered for upgrading.

Veterans could also apply by phone, and for the first time in history they would know the criteria to be used in evaluating their petitions for upgrading. There have been discharge review boards since 1944, but they decided cases informally and on bases essentially unknown to applicants. The Carter administration's program, the Special Discharge Review Program (SDRP), set forth specific criteria which, unless there were compelling reasons to the contrary, would lead to an automatic upgrade from "undesirable" to at least "general." These included being wounded in combat, receiving a military decoration, completing an assignment in Southeast Asia, serving a term of alternate service under the Ford clemency program (few deserters had, because their agreement to do so proved legally unenforceable), having served a prior tour of honorable service, or twenty-four months of satisfactory active duty before discharge.

Other factors giving support to an applicant's case included entering the military from a deprived background, being discharged for reasons of conscience, having problems with drugs or alcohol or other "personal problems," and possessing a record of good post-service conduct.

To be sure there were peculiarities in the program. Combat-zone deserters were denied relief, and the term "combat zone" was interpreted so broadly that a man who left during rest and recuperation or hospitalization outside Vietnam, but while his unit was still in Vietnam, was considered to have left from the combat zone. This definition affected only 5 percent of the total, since most AWOLs had left upon receiving orders to go to Asia or when they could not readjust after serving there, but it was surely a disturbing concession to the public's hostility.

Another anomaly was that anyone who had left military service during the era of Vietnam, but had turned himself in or been caught after March 28, 1973, was ineligible for the discharge upgrading program because of the date on his discharge paper. Yet someone who turned himself in after the SDRP was announced could apply for a better discharge. Court-martial discharges were excluded from the program, and this too was illogical, because 75 percent had been issued solely for absence, and it was entirely up to the particular commanding officer whether a long-term absentee appeared before a court-martial or received an administrative discharge.

It did not take Congress long to react to this program. On April 21, Rep. James Abdnor (R., S.D.) wrote a letter informing his colleagues of a press report that the Army would "consider" paid advertising for the SDRP. Referring to the mere possibility of some advertising as a "media blitz," Abdnor ranted that it "certainly tops anything that I have ever seen—we are going to spend money to call in the draft dodgers." Ignoring such minor details as that SDRP had nothing to do with draft evaders, Abdnor introduced a sense of Congress resolution that no public funds be used to buy advertising for the SDRP. Four days later, Rep. David Treen (R., La.) successfully offered a floor amendment to a Defense Department appropriations bill to accomplish Abdnor's wish. Congress had endorsed the idea that public service spots on TV were all that "bad discharge" veterans deserved.

That was only the opening salvo in a six-month battle to deny as much relief as possible to participants in the SDRP. Since the Congress did not have the power to deny veterans new discharge certificates, it did the next best thing. By April, several dozen Congressmen and Sen. Strom Thurmond (R., S.C.), had introduced legislation eliminating the Veterans Administration benefits available to all, or at least to some, SDRP participants. Normally, any upgraded discharge carries with it benefits proportionate to the length of satisfactory service.

But it would take some time for such legislation to be considered, and benefits were about to be paid to veterans who wanted to start school in September. Others were seeking treatment for service-connected disabilities that had gone unattended. To stem this flow of money, Republican Robin Beard, who represents most of the heart of Bible-belt Tennessee, offered an amendment to the fiscal 1978 Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill (it includes the Veterans Administration funding), the purpose of which was to prohibit the payment of benefits to any veterans who had received upgraded discharges through the SDRP. Beard labeled it a "temporary restraining order" until the Veterans' Affairs Committee could look more fully into the matter. Earlier that week, Chairman Ray Roberts (D., Texas)

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had selected a special subcommittee to examine the program. He chose for the purpose every committee member who had sponsored an anti-benefits bill and deliberately eliminated the high-ranking and liberal Don Edwards (D., Calif.).

During the floor debate on the amendment, Beard chastised the President for not coming to Congress with the SDRP program before permitting the Defense Department to announce it. He erroneously informed members that there was no provision for case-by-case review in the SDRP, and that the program would cost $400 million in the next three years alone. Such a figure would be reached only if every single undesirably discharged veteran were upgraded and got $3,000 worth of benefits, a preposterous assumption. G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery (D., Miss.) raved that if the House failed to accept the amendment, funds would be taken away from "totally disabled veterans." Images of World War II cripples being herded out of V.A. hospitals while deserters got Ph.D.s on the G.I. Bill undoubtedly danced in members' heads. The Beard Amendment passed, 273 to 136.

A lingering question was where the White House lobbyists had been before the vote. One Congressman commented: "If it had been a vote on a Defense Department hardware program, you couldn't even have gotten over to the floor without stepping on a dozen uniformed lobbyists. I didn't see one today." In fact, the administration depended almost entirely on V.A. liaison Timothy Craig, former member of the Ford clemency board, whose strong support for that approach made his lobbying for this more liberal program highly unconvincing.

At the House hearings on the SDRP, the administration witnesses, particularly V.A. general counsel Guy McMichael, were so lackluster that the White House told them to "sound more enthusiastic" when appearing before the Senate. In the Senate, Chairman Alan Cranston opened proceedings by announcing that all members of the Veterans' Committee had already endorsed the anti-benefits bill to be examined that day. Witness input, he implied, was obviously unnecessary.

Cranston played the most destructive role in the whole legislative attack on the SDRP. As chairman, he could easily have bottled up opposition to the program. He chose the opposite tack, becoming the principal sponsor of S.1307 which was co-sponsored by virtually every ultraconservative in the Senate. Cranston already fears for his 1980 re-election with a terror usually reserved for spiders and great heights.

The Senate bill stipulated that an SDRP applicant would get benefits along with his upgrade only if he would have received that upgrade under "generally applicable standards" in existence before the SDRP. The idea of denying benefits to an upgraded veteran was unprecedented and in this case entirely unfeasible since prior to SDRP no "applicable standards" had ever been published, all decisions having been made according to wildly varying informal guidelines. The disparity was apparent from 1976 records which show Air Force upgrades at 77 percent and Marine upgrades at 13 percent.

Cranston asked every witness who opposed his bill (virtually all of them did) whether it wasn't "better" than the Beard amendment. The Beard approach sounded worse, since it was phrased as a total prohibition, but it affected only one year's appropriations; money left over from 1977 appropriations was sufficient to pay benefit requests in the near future. Beard's amendment would become a serious problem only if he appended it to every future V.A. appropriations bill, an unlikely prospect. At the hearing, self-help groups of veterans from Vietnam told Cranston that the procedural complexity of his bill and its restrictive intent would be enough to deter applicants—which, as one veteran observed, was "the same effect the Beard amendment was really designed to achieve."

As Congress was attempting to undermine the discharge program, it was also hard at work on the earlier pardon of draft evaders. Rep. John Myers (R., Ind.) presented a floor amendment to the State, Judiciary, and Commerce Appropriations bill which prohibited any funds from being used after October 1 to drop indictments, issue pardons, or readmit exiles who had acquired foreign citizenship. It passed by voice vote.

Mark Hatfield (R., Ore.) hoped to stop it in the Senate, but once again the White House offered no serious cooperation. On the day of the vote Hatfield's staffers tried desperately to reach deputy counsel to the President Margaret McKenna (into whose lap amnesty had fallen) to urge that she call some moderate Democrats and to let her know that the vote would come up two hours earlier than expected. She returned no calls until noon, minutes before the vote. Hatfield's motion to strike the amendment lost by 38 to 44, whereas it is apparent from a glance at the vote list that a convincing intervention by Carter would have easily picked up the few supporters Hatfield needed. However, after October 1, the Justice Department continued processing cases with funds from agencies not covered by the restriction. Myers's vindictive amendment had no practical effect.

After the Hatfield setback, only Sens. Edward Brooke (R., Mass.) and James Abourezk (D., S.D.) seemed interested in fighting Cranston on the SDRP bill. A few days after the July Fourth recess, when Cranston intended to railroad the measure through on a unanimous consent motion, he discovered that Brooke had placed a "hold" on the bill. This infrequently invoked Senatorial privilege delays a vote for at least twenty-four hours. Cranston was incensed to the point of profanity but Brooke was adamant, saying, "It is a terrible bill." Meanwhile, to prevent a Senate version of the Beard amendment from coming up, Abourezk threatened to filibuster the entire $67 billion HUD bill. In addition, each day Brooke or Abourezk or both would "hold" the Cranston bill.

Eventually, increased Senate opposition to the bill began to be heard. For the only time all summer the White House actually called Senators to ask their opposition to restrictive measures. Cranston and his staff were seething. Finally, in early August, Cranston's general counsel phoned Steve Champlin, the expert lobbyist for the National Association of Concerned Veterans, to say Cranston "had been Mau-Maued and was losing

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credibility with moderates and liberals."

At this point, a new version of S.1307 was born. It would require Carter to set up a year-long, case-by-case program open to all veterans who at any time had received administrative "bad" discharges. The standards in the SDRP program could be used, provided that no single factor led to an automatic upgrade or denial. Persons upgraded would be subject to further scrutiny if they applied for benefits, but the language was so broad that virtually no one would actually have lost his benefits.

Meanwhile, over the August recess, the House committee lobbied for its SDRP bill. In addition to insisting on strict evaluations of all upgraded veterans, in order to withhold benefits from those who would not have been ungraded under earlier procedures, the committee now wanted a new provision that would flatly deny benefits to anyone who had been in continuous AWOL for 180 days or more. Mitigating circumstances, length of time left in one's enlistment, legal defenses and the overall service record were to be given no consideration. Tens of thousands of veterans would be affected because this bar was to be applied retroactively. One committee lawyer joked: "It was a compromise from having all deserters shot." Within a week after the recess the "reasonable" version of the Senate bill passed, 87 to 2; the House passed its version, 321 to 75.

The White House had had a clear chance to defeat the atrocious House bill because it was brought up on the "suspension calendar," when only a one-third vote is required to defeat a measure. The administration chose not to act, however, because, as Margaret McKenna said, it did not want to "embarrass" Roberts. Instead, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown was sent to convince Roberts that he should adopt the Senate version in conference. Brown was totally unsuccessful.

Before the House vote, Cranston was assured by the White House that Carter would sign his bill, but that any such deserter provision as appeared in the House bill was totally unacceptable. Cranston replied that he too strongly opposed that arbitrary provision.

The Senate and House committee staffs were then ready to arrange a compromise. Before they met Senate Veterans' Committee counsel Ed Scott told me, "I will be tough." As it turned out he and his boss Cranston weren't even semi-tough—the compromise looked remarkably like the House bill. It still contained the deserter provision, altered only by a right to appeal to the Veterans administrator for a decision as to whether there had been "compelling circumstances" for the absence, and by limiting retroactivity to SDRP applicants. (Consigning a decision to the V.A. is like putting a match to it, since such decisions are unappealable in the federal courts and the fee for legal representation is limited to $10.) All "undesirable" discharges already upgraded under the SDRP had to be reopened to weed out the allegedly undeserving. On voice votes, the bill sailed through both houses by September 23, and headed for Carter's desk.

While the Congress was undermining Carter's program, the machinery of the program was nevertheless functioning. However, only 725 of the 4,000 at-large deserters had turned themselves in for a quick "undesirable" discharge. Jon Landau, attorney for the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, noted: "Deserters are invariably pleased with the way they are treated on the base. The problem comes when they try to get an upgrade." Here was one of the strange quirks of the Carter program. Most of the deserters who had not participated in the earlier Ford program were those most ideologically opposed to the war in Vietnam. They now sought to get their legal problems resolved through Carter's less offensive program, but the review boards were unwilling to recognize anti-war motivation as a ground for upgrading the discharge. All the Congressional vitriol about "deserters" getting benefits was based on the misconception that anti-war activists would end up with free college tuition and pensions. Actually, the people the Congress hated most were getting nothing but the dismissal of possible legal action.

Other deserters failed to participate for reasons that were largely practical, not ideological. Some were deliberately discouraged from applying. Marine deserters who inquired were told that the processing at Quantico, Va. would take "several months," whereas it took only two days. Consulates in some Canadian cities also gave out false information. In Calgary, deserters who had acquired Canadian citizenship were told that they could get a discharge but would be instantly deported to Canada.

Many deserters hesitated because the administration had not yet issued an Executive Order removing immigration problems for military personnel under the exclusion clause. Often the deserters, particularly those in nonurban areas abroad, did not know that the program existed. Joe Somsky of *AMEX-Canada* magazine complained: "The State Department has done nothing to advertise this program. I know of one press release sent out by the embassy, but no papers even printed it." The deserters were also not generally aware that the government would, if asked, pay for a flight from abroad to a processing center and would pay 15¢ a mile to get the returnee back to his parents' home.

The uncertain final shape of legislation also kept SDRP applications low. Although 15,710 eligible applicants called in during the first month, by August only 3,138 more applications had been received. Organizations for veterans of Vietnam informally boycotted the program until they could judge what damage might be done to their counselees. Said Bill Pankratius of the Southern Center for Military and Veterans Rights: "In good conscience we just couldn't jeopardize people who needed help. If Congress hadn't gotten vindictive, we would have made a much greater effort to locate applicants and put them through." The older organizations, like the VFW, took a noticeably different stand toward applicants. They lobbied hard for all restrictive legislation, but many of their counselors meanwhile sent people through the SDRP.

When the SDRP ground to a stop on October 4, only 36,826 veterans had applied, a scant 9 percent of those eligible. Of the 28,070 cases adjudicated, 3,181 "generals" (39 percent of those considered) and 13,046 "undesirables" (65 percent) had been upgraded. Of the "undesirables" a mere 1,682 went fully to "honorable."

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Another 8,750 cases are pending. Although free counsel is provided for a personal appeal if one's "undesirable" is not changed after the initial file review, fewer than a third of the rejected applicants seem aware of the option. Of the roughly 13,000 veterans newly eligible for V.A. benefits, only 2,257 have thus far applied.

In late September, after the anti-benefits bill was sent to Carter, Congressman Beard removed his amendment from the still-pending HUD bill. He had, he said, been assured by the White House, via Ray Roberts, that the President would sign the compromise bill. After a press conference Carter was asked about any "agreement" to sign the House-like version of the bill. He denied any such arrangement. The President was evidently telling all the truth he knew.

But Congressional liaison chief Frank Moore had made a deal with Roberts and Speaker O'Neill that they would clean up the HUD bill in exchange for Carter's signature. Moore apparently hadn't bothered to find out that there were catastrophic differences between the Senate bill and the new "compromise," and it was almost a week before the rest of Carter's advisers learned what he had done.

The White House was now in a most awkward position. Promises from Moore are not easily broken, even when he has no authority to make them. On the other hand, even the Defense Department considered the bill cumbersome and irrational, and counseled a veto.

At a press conference sponsored on October 4 by the United Church of Christ and the ACLU a question was raised as to the bill's constitutionality. Retroactivity applied to people who had participated in a special program and not to others who had moved through regular channels, arguably violating the Fifth Amendment. Administration officials ordered a quick memo from the Justice Department to bolster the ACLU position. Perhaps Carter could veto on constitutional grounds alone. In the end, there was no veto. Most observers felt it could be sustained in the Senate, but the White House decided not to fight.

The White House press release immediately after Carter signed the bill was a model of double-think. The President claimed there was an intention of "equity and compassion" in the bill, but there was in reality not an ounce of anything but vengeance in its entire legislative history. The President announced he would send some corrective legislation to Congress next year to remedy some sections of the bill he did not like, but of course made no mention of how little he had done to stop this bill from getting to his desk. Carter said it was not radically different in final form from the Senate bill, except for the new definition of "deserter"—a definition intended to exclude veterans by the thousands. The President even admitted he was signing a bill that some of his advisers claimed was unconstitutional in part.

There were many other things the President did not say. He expressed no sense of moral outrage that the Congress had gutted his initially conservative attempt to help a few veterans. He said nothing to comfort the veterans who had believed in him enough to apply to his special program. David Addlestone of the ACLU Military Discharge project can come up with one note of solace, though. People with "bad" discharges cannot return to military service. If we send the troops to defend the Panama Canal, these veterans won't be able to go. □

SKYHORSE AND MOHAWK

MORE THAN A MURDER TRIAL

DAN BLACKBURN

On October 10, 1974, three people—two of them American Indians—climbed into a car and headed for downtown Los Angeles to take part in a protest rally on the steps of the federal building there. The rally never developed. Later that day, three other people—again including two American Indians—took a cab from outside the home of actor David Carradine. Two different trips; two separate groups of people. Yet they came together in a murder mystery so wrapped in political overtones that more than three years later it is still unfolding.

At first, it seemed a simple story of sudden death and stereotypical drunken Indians. But the cast of characters has begun to take on larger significance and no one knows for certain who else may spring unannounced from the wings to add to the confusion. Perhaps the first person to be introduced should be the one who most often seems to be overlooked—the victim.

The police report identifies him as George Aird. White. Male. Twenty-seven years old. He was broke and trying to support himself and the black woman and child with whom he lived by driving a cab. On the night of October 10, he received a call to pick up what promised to be a pretty good fare. Three people wanted to go from David Carradine's home in Los Angeles to Box Canyon across the Ventura County line. Aird took the call. Several hours later, his body was found stuffed in a Box Canyon drainpipe. He had been brutally beaten and stabbed seventeen times. Some of his hair had been cut off. Sheriff's deputies quickly arrested the three cab riders, all of whom had been drinking heavily. Their clothes and boots were spattered with blood and it seemed an open-and-shut case.

The three people arrested were American Indians Marvin Redshirt and Marcella Eaglestaff, and white teenager Holly Broussard, the girlfriend of Redshirt and daughter of a retired Navy commander. Even now there

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is no serious dispute that all three were present at the time of the murder and participated in the beating of Aird. But Redshirt and Eaglestaff were allowed to plead guilty to lesser charges and all the charges against Broussard were dropped after the trio agreed to testify that two some-time political activists were the real killers of George Aird. They pointed accusing fingers at Paul Skyhorse and Richard Mohawk, the two Indians who had gone to the phantom rally.

Skyhorse and Mohawk, presumably fearing police interrogation, left the area immediately after the murder. Six days later, they were arrested in Phoenix, Ariz. Their arrest came after an incident in a Phoenix dance hall where Mohawk was shot three times by the boyfriend of a woman whom he had asked to dance. Investigators recognized them from "wanted" pictures on an FBI flier. Both men had previous criminal records involving robbery charges. Mohawk also is accused of escaping from a courthouse in New York while facing another robbery charge, and Skyhorse has been known to feign insanity in order to avoid jail. Attempts by their supporters to depict them as leaders in the Indian community are misleading. However, both have done some organizing for the American Indian Movement, primarily in Chicago, and the murder took place at a camp once sponsored by AIM. It is largely because of this connection that political clouds began to appear on the horizon.

The camp is located off a dusty road in Box Canyon and offers a substantial degree of seclusion. The land is owned by a small religious cult called Fountain of the World. Members of the Charles Manson family used the site as a hideout after the Tate-LaBianca murders, and Manson considered trying to recruit cult members into his helter-skelter scheme. Several years earlier, a guru and his flock were blown up there when a disgruntled follower used dynamite to emphasize his unhappiness over the holy man's determination to appropriate all the women in the group for himself. The place has a certain history.

AIM leased the camp nearly a year before George Aird died there. The AIM representatives negotiated a deal with the Fountain of the World under which they would pay an unusually low rent of $125 per month, plus the cost of utilities. The favorable rent was said to be due to the fact that the leader of the religious group felt American Indians were victims of discrimination, and because he believed himself to be in tune with their spirituality. Rent for the first two months was paid by George Roberts, a Los Angeles businessman, long associated with AIM. At that time, a checking account was established for the camp and a woman known as Blue Dove was given control of it because she seemed to have some knowledge of bookkeeping. Her role was to loom larger as time passed.

Initially, the Indians had no name for the camp. After several months, Douglass Durham, then a national officer of AIM, suggested that it be called AIM Camp 13, although there were no other such camps. It was intended primarily as a retreat where Indians could follow their own way of life in a relatively rural and peaceful setting. But conditions soon deteriorated. Alcohol and drugs became part of the daily camp scene and drifters who had no connection with AIM began to arrive. Occasional rifle shots were fired into the camp from the surrounding hills. The AIM leadership decided to withdraw its support and that is where the matter stood when Paul Skyhorse and Richard Mohawk arrived at the camp.

An attempt was made to clean up the camp and establish some sort of order. Skyhorse approached Douglass Durham about renewing AIM's support. At this point, no one was sure who was paying the rent. Durham turned down the request but did display an active interest in the camp and its residents. At about the same time, Blue Dove reappeared. It was she who drove Skyhorse and Mohawk to the Los Angeles federal building. The photos which were used to identify the two men when they were arrested in Phoenix had been taken secretly while they waited for the rally to begin. When it did not, Blue Dove drove them back to the camp. Months later, they were to learn that Blue Dove's real name is Virginia DeLuce and that she is an FBI undercover operative.

The revelation of Blue Dove's identity prompted two questions which have never been answered. First, was the FBI secretly financing AIM Camp 13 as part of a plan to discredit the Indian organization? Blue Dove initially controlled the checkbook and during a substantial part of the camp's life no one knew who was paying the rent. Second, were Skyhorse and Mohawk being set up for some charge when Blue Dove drove them to the fictitious rally and there had their pictures taken? No one seriously suggests that the FBI or anyone else knew in advance that George Aird would be murdered that night at AIM Camp 13. But there is a suggestion that some sort of COINTELPRO operation may have been in the works.

Weight was added to these suspicions by the announcement in March 1975 that Douglass Durham was also an FBI undercover agent. Durham later told the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee that what he described as a "grizzly (*sic*) ceremonial murder" had taken place at Camp 13. After giving testimony, Durham became a frequent figure on the John Birch Society lecture circuit. Before his cover was broken he tried to block efforts to provide legal assistance for Skyhorse and Mohawk through the ACLU, and he took part in early defense strategy sessions. Further, it was Durham who initially prevented AIM from lending organizational support to the defense.

Once Skyhorse and Mohawk had been arrested, their cases moved slowly, largely because the defense offered a long series of motions at the pretrial proceedings in Ventura. The drawn-out pretrial activities contributed to one of the more controversial episodes surrounding the case. The annual Ventura County Bar Association dinner in late 1976 featured a skit, *The People* v. *Tonto*, which satirized the trial and included the following lyrics:

> *Some people say the court ought to follow the laws,*
> *But this court deals with Braves and Squaws,*
> *Braves and Squaws and prairie skies,*
> *My mind's growing weak as the years go by.*

The skit had been written by an attorney for one

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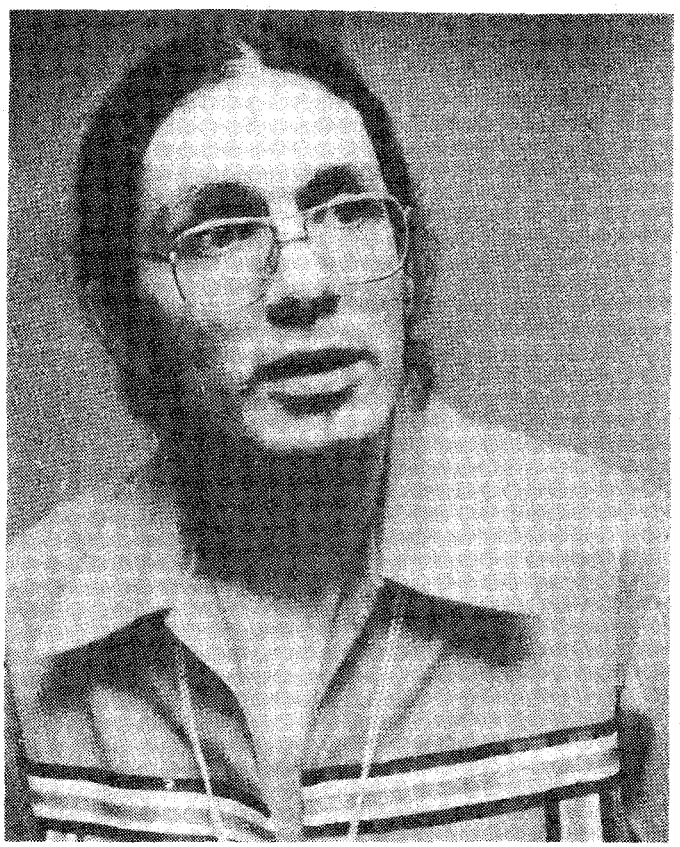

Paul Skyhorse

of the prosecution witnesses and the judge who was then presiding over the case was in the audience. He later withdrew from the trial on the ground that he was "weary," and—largely because of the skit, which prompted an unprecedented intervention by the California State Bar Association—the trial was transferred to Los Angeles where pretrial proceedings resumed on March 29, 1977. Actual testimony finally began in June and is expected to continue well into the new year.

Judge Floyd C. Dodson is now presiding over the trial and his presence adds yet another wrinkle to the case. In November 1976, Dodson was defeated for re-election by a margin of nearly 2 to 1. However, fewer than twenty-four hours before his term expired, Dodson filed notice of retirement, thereby becoming eligible for appointment as an assigned retired judge. He was then assigned to the trial of Skyhorse and Mohawk who promptly petitioned to have him removed on the ground that the assignment of a defeated judge violated voters' rights under the California constitution. The petition was denied, but California Chief Justice Rose Bird has since issued a memorandum saying that defeated judges will no longer be assigned cases.

This means that the present trial is Dodson's last case. He has predicted that it may consume eighteen months; if so, he will be paid $73,749. That consideration became an issue when Dodson refused to accept a plea bargain, which had been agreed upon by both the prosecution and defense and would have ended the trial. In exchange for no-contest pleas to reduced charges, Skyhorse and Mohawk would have been set free on the basis of the more than three years which they have already spent in jail. The defense charged that Dodson refused to accept this arrangement because of his financial interest in the case. An appeal to a higher court was turned down. Judge Dodson ordered the plea-bargain agreement sealed and details of its contents have never been made public.

AIM leader Dennis Banks vehemently opposed the plea bargain at a time when the prosecution was arguing strongly for acceptance, its case having been badly shaken by its own chief witness, Marvin Redshirt.

Testifying under a promise of immunity, Redshirt first said that he saw Skyhorse and Mohawk stab the cab driver and that they forced him to follow suit. However, he then admitted that he had struck the first blow in the beating of George Aird. He also admitted that he had lied "about a thousand times" during previous testimony and in other statements. Further, he appeared on the witness stand so drunk that the judge ordered him jailed for tests which showed the alcohol content of his blood to be at a level that would put most people into a coma. The prosecution withdrew its agreement to the plea bargain after other witnesses appeared.

Skyhorse and Mohawk have not lacked talented legal support. Their essentially volunteer defense team is headed by Leonard I. Weinglass, who handled the Chicago Seven trial, the Pentagon Papers trial of Daniel Ellsberg and the trial of Symbionese Liberation Army members William and Emily Harris. However, Skyhorse and Mohawk are also representing themselves. In 1975, the U.S. Supreme Court issued the *Faretta* decision granting defendants the

Richard Mohawk

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right to represent themselves, but adding that the right—known as *pro per* status—could be revoked if a defendant engaged in disruptive courtroom behavior. The decision was issued after Skyhorse and Mohawk had been in jail for almost a year and they moved promptly to take advantage of it.

On November 7, 1977, Judge Dodson, who has frequently displayed hostility toward both defendants, revoked their *pro per* status on the unprecedented ground of their alleged misbehavior outside the courtroom. The pair was accused by sheriff's deputies of engaging in a jailhouse brawl and of being generally disruptive. During a long hearing on this subject, witnesses testified for both sides, but Judge Dodson rejected all those who supported Skyhorse and Mohawk, suggesting that they had all lied. Because Dodson's ruling puts major new limits on the scope of the *Faretta* decision, the issue may go all the way back to the U.S. Supreme Court for further argument.

The trial took an even seamier turn when the prosecution produced a jail inmate who claimed that Skyhorse and Mohawk forced him to engage in oral sex with them by threatening to do to him what they had done to the cab driver. Such a threat—if actually made—could be used as an indication of guilt. However, the inmate turned out to be wildly unreliable, with a long history of mental instability. Finally, even Dodson suggested that the prosecution was too far out on a limb and the issue was dropped. Skyhorse and Mohawk have filed a $2 million damage suit against the prosecution, charging a conspiracy to create false testimony.

The witnesses are testifying in a special, high-security courtroom where everyone must be searched before entering and spectators are separated from the trial participants by a bulletproof barrier. It is argued that this setting, because it implies a potential for violence in the courtroom, tends to prejudice the jury. The spectators, many of whom support Skyhorse and Mohawk, often fill the courtroom to near capacity; several classes of grade school and high school students have added the trial to their list of field trips. The heavy attendance is said to lift the defendants' spirits. It also may help explain their periodic baiting of the quick-tempered judge.

Most of the major prosecution witnesses—including all those who were present at Camp 13 when, or shortly after, George Aird was murdered—have been heard by now. Except that it places both Skyhorse and Mohawk at the camp when the murder took place, the testimony has been deeply flawed by contradictions. All the key witnesses have admitted lying, at one time or another, about what they saw.

Hollywood's liberal activist community is taking an interest in the trial; familiar faces from television and the movies can be seen among the onlookers and fund-raising events are beginning to enlist entertainment figures. Even a screenplay is said to be in the works. The National Council of Churches has circulated a fund-raising letter.

Amnesty International has selected the *Skyhorse-Mohawk* case for investigation, a decision based in part on charges that Skyhorse and Mohawk were beaten while held in the Ventura jail and that they have been mistreated and harassed by sheriff's deputies since being transferred to Los Angeles. The organization also raises the question of whether the two defendants are receiving a fair trial.

The prosecution insists that it is engaged in nothing more than a clean-cut murder trial and that Skyhorse and Mohawk are the killers of George Aird. Yet the evidence presented thus far is inconclusive at best, and some of the testimony actually tends to exonerate the pair. Many observers remain puzzled as to why Skyhorse and Mohawk—against whom the physical evidence is almost nonexistent—are on trial, while the three people who were originally arrested, and against whom the evidence was the strongest, are free. The involvement by the FBI raises more questions about why the only two AIM

LETTERS (*Continued from page 674*)

20,000 municipal employees and drastically curtailing its public services. Throughout the nation, other state and local governments were following New York City's lead, and the survival of our union and of collective bargaining in public employment seemed to be in peril.

Two years later, AFSCME continues to perform its mission of defending public employees (and that's different from being "on the defensive"). But we're also continuing to grow—at a time when other unions are losing members and despairing of organizing the unorganized. Union membership in the United States declined by 767,000 from 1974 to 1976 but, during this same period, AFSCME grew from some 650,000 members at the beginning of 1974 to our current level of 750,000.

Let me correct—or merely update—several of Levinson's overly gloomy statements. . . .

In Michigan, we did not finish "a distant second" to something called "the Michigan State Employees Union." In the Lansing area alone, AFSCME Council 11 represents more than 5,000 state employees.

In New Jersey, we held onto our contract. In the recent election AFSCME helped the unpopular incumbent Gov. Brendan Byrne win re-election by focusing public attention upon his Republican opponent's irresponsible campaign promise to eliminate an unpopular—but necessary—state income tax.

In Illinois, AFSCME succeeded in negotiating the first union contracts ever for more than 25,000 state professional, paraprofessional and clerical employees. . . . There was no "wildcat strike" in Illinois.

In Atlanta, we've taken everything that Maynard Jackson and the white and black power structure could throw at us, but AFSCME Local 1644 is hanging in there. We recently regained dues checkoff.

Levinson to the contrary, AFSCME has been organizing successfully in the Middle West and in the South. Since 1974, we have won elections to represent 42,000 state employees in Illinois, 13,500 public workers in Iowa, 14,662 state employees in Florida, and 8,000 state employees in Missouri. . . .

And, for the record, despite Levinson's grim prognosis, AFSCME successfully negotiated a second contract in Massachusetts for state employees. . . .

I question also Levinson's assertion that AFSCME president Jerry Wurf is beleaguered by challengers on the Left and the Right, within our union and the labor movement. AFSCME leaders and members have a simple goal with which trade unionists of all political persuasions can agree—to build a strong, democratic union capable of defending our members and all the people who depend on their services.

Michael Dowling, Director
Public Affairs Department, AFSCME

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members present in the camp at the time of the killing wind up charged with the murder.

Much of the testimony paints a picture of American Indians as being drunken and immoral. General Custer would love it. Concerned AIM officials have been disturbed by what the jury and the spectators are seeing and hearing. The life style put on display is no more representative of American Indians than Charles Manson's crowd was representative of the young people of the 1960s. Yet it is on the public record and, despite a very real dignity which the witnesses often display, the testimony tends to reinforce the worst of stereotypes. At the same time, but on a more subtle level, it emphasizes the debilitating effect upon Indians of the clash between their culture and that of the dominant white man. And it is just such an effect that organizations like AIM are now trying to counteract.

The trial is likely to continue for several months. As it grinds on, the courtroom exchanges grow increasingly rancorous. Judge Dodson has taken to storming off the bench, shouting at the defendants, and often raising objections on behalf of the prosecution. It is more than a murder trial and more than a political trial. It encompasses conflicting concepts of white man's justice and Indian thinking. In the end, it may display both the strengths and the weaknesses of the judicial system. But, until then, Paul Skyhorse and Richard Mohawk are not the only prisoners in that high security courtroom. □

THE ISRAELIS WATCH BEGIN

CAN HE BEND OR MUST HE GO?

MILTON VIORST

The doves are coming out of the dovecote, testing their wings cautiously, looking around to make sure they're not alone. Menahem Begin has not yet shown any sign of noticing them, but he has heard their soft sounds. As a sensitive politician, he understands that, unless fed and cared for, they could present a major problem for him, and even threaten the survival of his government.

On the first Sunday of December, for example, the council of Mapam, the principal party of the Labor Alignment, which has been in opposition since Begin's election last May, called upon the government to follow a clear policy of territorial compromise on all fronts. In itself, the statement departed little from the standard Labor line, and Meir Talmi, the party's Secretary General, reaffirmed his opposition to a Palestinian state. But he then added that Israel *would have no right to crush it by force should the Palestinians decide to create one.* Such a statement would have been unthinkable even a month ago.

While I was in Israel, I even heard Abba Eban, the former Foreign Minister, say, or almost say, that he was shifting his ground. It was one of those typical Ebanisms, erudite and involuted; I remember its going something like this: "I think we can no longer rule out the possibility that, some time in the future, it could be necessary for us Israelis to end our rejection of the notion that the Palestinians can forever be denied their own state." What I drew from those semantics was the plea of a prudent politician to his countrymen that they contemplate a new vision. Eban has always been a shade more daring than the mainstream of Israeli politicians, but he has never been foolhardy.

Nor are all the doves in Labor's flock. The most obvious of them belong to the Democratic Movement for Change, the party of clean government and hazy ideology that was formed before the last election to take advantage of the popular disaffection for Labor. But they have also begun to make themselves known within Begin's majority, and it is said with considerable authority that they are present in the Cabinet itself. There are doves within the two religious parties that form part of Begin's majority and even Ezer Weizman, Begin's close friend and Minister of Defense, has been making pacific noises. So far, those people within the majority—save for a few renegades of junior rank—have chosen not to pressure the Prime Minister unduly, but their self-restraint is likely to vanish if it appears that Israel is letting an opportunity for peace slip through its fingers.

Strong as Begin currently appears, the notion that he may fall is not farfetched. His basic majority consists of sixty-two votes in the 120-seat Knesset, forty-five of his own Likud coalition and seventeen from the religious parties. In addition, he counts on the fourteen votes of the Democratic Movement for Change, which entered the government with some hard feelings only this fall in exchange for four Cabinet posts. The paradox of the DMC, however, is that, while its influence within the government is limited, its potential power is huge if it leaves. If the DMC stalked out on the peace issue, it might very well set off a stampede. Even if a few Labor hawks bolted their party to support the Prime Minister's policy, it is unlikely that Begin could survive the defections within his own coalition, and the government would fall.

For the moment, however, the Israelis are strongly behind Begin. He is, after all, the man who brought Sadat to Jerusalem, and I have heard no Israeli say that Shimon Peres, the Labor candidate for Prime Minister in the last election, much less the former Labor Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin, could have done so. What I hear

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are regular attempts to rationalize Begin's eloquent extremism, and constant allusion to the Nixon-in-China and de Gaulle-in-Algeria analogies. I have heard no Israeli reminisce about the good old days when Labor was in power, but I've heard a great deal of quiet soul-searching over whether Begin, whatever the drama of the embrace with Sadat, might not prove too much of a dogmatist to finish the work he began. In short, the support that I sense for Begin consists not so much of confidence as of hope.

Yet even that is amazing, considering the apparent solidity of Israeli public opinion as recently as a few weeks ago. Many Israelis are tempted these days to rewrite history, arguing that Begin's victory last spring was not a hard-line triumph. They point out that it was really a repudiation of the Labor Party, for its tired leadership and corrupt bureaucracy. They are right, but they forget that, if war and peace was not an election issue, it was because both parties sensed that the dove was a sure symbol for defeat. Each crowded the other to the Right. There was no pacific alternative, not even the possibility of a war-peace dialogue in the campaign. Israel was gloomily united in the contention that peace could be achieved only by the intimidation of its neighbors, if not by their outright conquest.

The miracle of the Sadat visit is that, almost overnight, it broke up the jam of public opinion. The most thrilling quality about being in Israel that weekend was that you could literally feel the iciness melt from people's hearts as each hour passed. Israelis sat before their television sets and cried when Sadat appeared. The newspapers, accustomed to blowing the bugles of vigilance, became overnight the apostles of conciliation. Reasonable men, who for years had conditioned their minds to fighting with Egypt forever, were dizzied by the vision of readjustment. If skepticism did not vanish at once, the doves ceased to be objects of contempt, anger, derision. When Sadat said that 70 percent of the problem between Jews and Arabs was psychological, Israel saw that he was right, and rejoiced in his wisdom.

When Israel awoke from the seventy-two hour euphoria, it discovered that what had once appeared to be a solid front against Arab perfidy had broken down into component parts, at least two of which could be readily classified. The first, and probably the largest, in terms of population were the "strategists," for whom the territory taken from the Arabs in 1967 was of interest only insofar as it affected Israeli security. The second, of which Menahem Begin is the most noteworthy representative, were the "religionists," for whom *much* of the territory was the realization of a promise God extended to the people of Israel in the Bible. As long as Israel remained beleaguered, these two parts were, as a practical matter, indistinguishable. But once Sadat stepped in friendship on Israeli soil, they became incompatible.

Even during the weekend of the visit, the strategists staked out different positions from those of the religionists. The world paid little attention to the speech of Shimon Peres, an anticlimax after Begin's words to the Knesset, but few Israelis failed to note—and, for the most part, to note with approval—his explicit statement that Israel would have to give something up in behalf of a lasting peace. Golda Meir, who in retirement still represents the heart of the Labor Party, belied her reputation for intractability by telling Sadat that she was prepared for territorial compromise on *all* of Israel's borders.

In effect, Peres and Mrs. Meir were doing no more than returning to the traditional Labor Party position. This position had lapsed over the years for various reasons: it seemed to be leading no closer to negotiations, it encountered a population grown increasingly accustomed to the breathing space of the post-1967 borders, it was an obstacle to Labor Party leaders anxious to compensate for their weakness by making their rhetoric more shrill. Those years had given birth to a hundred plans, the most celebrated bearing the names of Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and his immediate predecessor Yigal Allon, and there is surely some truth to the charge that the profusion of paperwork was a disguise for Israel's unwillingness to face up to the minimum conditions that the Arabs would accept. But, true or not, the position reflected the Labor Party's belief that the territory was not sacred, and what is not sacred can be bargained away in the interest of peace.

Abba Eban, with his remarkable capacity for piercing to the core of issues, defines an Israeli dove as someone willing to trade territory for peace, and he adds that the better the quality of peace the more territory an Israeli is willing to trade. By that Eban means that a peace of open borders, permitting Israelis free access to the returned land, would be much less threatening than a peace which established borders behind which Arabs could hide, presumably to do Israel ill. It came to me how true Eban's statement was when I was driving from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, over a road that passed through what was Jordan until 1967. If Israelis can cross the old frontiers freely, it hardly matters who rules the territory behind them, even Palestinians. Open borders would not replace security guarantees, but they would do much to allay the fear that any land returned to the Arabs would necessarily serve as a beachhead for attacks. Then the old aphorism about Arab artillery being 7 miles (or was it 14 miles or 7 kilometers?) from Tel Aviv would lose all its meaning.

Begin, of course, sees the situation quite differently. He makes a fundamental distinction between the territories, some of which are sacred and some only strategic. The Bible says nothing about ancient Israel extending over the Golan Heights or into the Sinai, but it says a great deal about the life of the Hebrews in Judea and Samaria, which we now call the West Bank. Cynical Arabs see the attachment of Begin and his kind to the Biblical argument as nothing more than a cover for old-fashioned imperialism, and no doubt there are among Israelis some old-fashioned imperialists who practice Biblical exploitation. But I know of no reason to doubt the sincerity of Begin's conviction, any more than I doubt its danger. Begin would gladly deal off the Golan and the Sinai in return for security guarantees, but giving back

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the West Bank remains for him in the terrible domain of heresy.

That's why the course that peace-making activities have taken since Sadat's visit has been so pleasing to Begin. Nothing could make him happier than to neutralize Egypt's military power, and thereby eliminate the threat of war, by giving back territory that Israel does not want in any case. The more the "rejectionist" Arabs force Sadat to act alone, the happier Begin will be. There is consistency in this, in that Arab extremists have always been the most valuable allies of the Israeli hard-liners.

For years, each time the doves seemed to be gaining respectability, Arafat would issue an outrageous statement in Beirut, or Black September would murder some Israeli children in a raid. Since the Sadat visit, Israelis accept the fact that there are differences among Arabs; they are willing to trust Egypt on a Sinai settlement. But the recent savage dance of the "rejectionists" in Tripoli seems to have shelved for the time being any hard decisions over the other territories, and Begin is presumably delighted.

The hazard is that a neutralization of Egypt might well persuade Israelis that their problem was solved, when in fact the real issue remained untouched. In

TOUGH TALK FROM A DOVE

The following substantial excerpt from an interview with Arie Eliav, often called Israel's number-one Dove, was conducted right after the visit to Israel of Egypt's President Sadat. The interviewer was Mark Bruzonsky, a research associate of Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies and an associate editor of Worldview. *Eliav was a leading functionary of the Labor Party which controlled Israel's Government until this year. After becoming Secretary General of the party (1970-72), he broke with its leadership and came out for an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. He has had meetings with representatives of the PLO in Paris. In the 1977 election which brought the Likud Party to power, Eliav's Sheli Party won two Knesset seats. The entire Eliav interview will appear in the January-February issue of* Worldview.

Q. What is it in Israel that makes it so difficult for intelligent people to accept in principle the obvious about the existence of a Palestinian national movement?

A. We are a paranoid, schizophrenic society. We've got all the right to be—all the right to be paranoid and schizophrenic . . . because of the 2,000 years, because of the traumas, and not less because of the horrible attitude of the PLO.

I think I overcame the traumas. And I don't want people to throw at me the Holocaust. When Abba Eban speaks about the Holocaust I abhor it. I don't want the Holocaust thrown at me, not at my generation. Maybe you were not born then. But my wife and me, we don't want the Holocaust thrown at us. She was in the death camps and I saved her from the death camps as a soldier. So I saw the Holocaust.

So I think I overcame it. But many didn't. And I don't blame them. Now the PLO, instead of enhancing my hand, the hand of people in Sheli and the Council—the Israeli doves—they did to us a horrible turn when we started meeting with them. Instead of them giving us some rope, they did to us what Begin is doing to Sadat. They didn't give us an inch.

Q. What did they do?

A. They denied the talks! Whenever I said I met [Issam] Sartawi—and he's a good man and he's ready to meet me halfway on two states, two peoples, two nations, two national movements—Kaddoumi came and said he didn't know who Sartawi is, his people would never meet with Zionists, and no such talks took place. They discredited us before the election.

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Q. From my point of view I look at the ideological statements and the positions of the PLO and I see tremendous change.

A. No doubt. No doubt. But you are not working here. You are not traumatized; you are not schizophrenic. You're an onlooker. People here have to have tangible proof. I should have brought a piece of paper, signed, saying, "O.K., let's call it quits—'67 borders, two peoples, full peace." They never gave it to me, they couldn't.

Q. You don't seem very sensitive to their own ideological and political problems.

A. I'm very sensitive. So what? Out of my sensitivity I got two members of Knesset. So what? The PLO, for their own good, could have changed the political arena in Israel. They didn't, because they are governed by (*a*) internal rivalries and (*b*) by extremists; as we are.

So there's symmetry. Every day that Begin puts in a West Bank settlement it's field day for Habash and other extremists. Every day that there is a Maalot or Kiryat Shemona [terrorist attacks], it's a field day for Israeli extremists.

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Q. How do you view the U.S. role in these PLO efforts? Did we encourage them properly?

A. No, you didn't.

Q. What should we have done?

A. People in the State Department. . . . It took them . . . a long time, like a dinosaur, to recognize the importance, the centrality of the Palestinian problem.

Q. But they came to us in November 1976, shortly after you started meeting with them, and they started opening indirect talks with the United States Government. Did we mishandle that opportunity?

A. Sure you did.

Q. What did we do wrong?

A. First of all, they mishandled it. They went to the wrong people. You mishandled it because you didn't put it on a very high level. You put it on a very low level. I'm talking about the Ford administration. . . . Then Carter has had other things on his mind. Sartawi

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justice to Begin, it should be noted that in London the other day he acknowledged that, though he was willing to sign a separate peace with Sadat, such a treaty would be only the beginning of making peace. He also repeated, in London as he had in Washington and in Jerusalem, that everything is negotiable, but it is hard to know what he means by that facile expression. During the back and forth over Geneva before Sadat's visit, he used those words, but added that if the subject of a Palestinian state was raised, the Israeli delegation would walk out. He has still to enunciate the principle that he is willing to surrender territories on the West Bank. He has said that, when negotiations begin, he will show the world how reasonable he is—but what is reasonable to him may be quite unreasonable to the Arabs, and to the world. The prospect still seems poor that, under Begin's administration, the issue of the West Bank can be resolved. And, unless it is, there will never be tranquility—though there may be a prolonged de facto peace —in the Middle East.

The struggle, after all, is over Palestine. It has been obscured over the years by Nasser's Pan-Arabism, by Islam's concern for its holy places, by U.N. resolutions on Zionism and imperialism, by the PLO's terrorism.

MARK BRUZONSKY INTERVIEWS ARIE ELIAV

was mistreated in America by everybody. He came to Cairo with his pants down. Nobody took him seriously in America. . . . I think he made many mistakes himself because he was new.

Q. Should we have given them the office they wanted in Washington?

A. It's not a question of the office. To my mind you should have told—via the Saudis or any other way to Arafat, not to Sartawi—should have told them, "You have to behave differently, you have to spell it out, you have to talk differently." Then maybe, just maybe, via pressure on them, they would have talked differently and then the political arena would have been different. But you didn't press them, you didn't press us. You used silk gloves.

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Q. What should the United States do now vis-à-vis the PLO?

A. The tragedy is that the PLO are making their own mistake. They are caught in their own Catch 22, as we are, as our government is. All through the Palestinian national movement's history they missed their boats, they missed their planes. The Mufti said all or nothing and he got nothing. Husseini said all or nothing and got killed. Shukairy said all or nothing and he was demoted. They cannot come out of it as yet.

Q. But the PLO has offered, behind the scenes, to accept 242 with reservations on the national question, if the United States will support a Palestinian state.

A. But they're not doing what Sadat did. They didn't have a daring man, and they don't act like Sadat, who will spell it out.

Q. What do you want them to say, clearly?

A. I want them to say that for full-fledged peace they are ready and willing to recognize Israel—not its right to exist, who wants it from them—to recognize Israel, conclude a full-fledged peace, and make their state in the West Bank and Gaza somehow federated with Jordan (it's their business), and then this is the end of it, the end of the conflict, no more; this is it.

Q. When you say federated with Jordan, if they want to have their own state, passports, flags. . . .

A. It's their own business.

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Q. Will Sadat make a separate peace with Israel?

A. No, I don't think he will, he can't. Let's say he won't and there will be another war. If there will be, what will the Palestinians gain? They'll be the first lambs to be slaughtered. So if there are responsible leaders —you're making speeches to me about their ideology —but they're risking the lives of a million and a half people, the remnants of their own people.

What do I want from them? A Yariv formula, that's all. "If Israel will recognize us, we'll recognize Israel." That's all I want from them. What is it? Is it a very big sacrifice? They've got a million people under military rule. If there is another war they'll have tens of thousands of killed and hundreds of thousands of refugees.

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Q. What do you think about the American Jewish community?

A. There are many closet doves, many realists. When I came I talked my head off from Boston to Los Angeles.

But you American Jews are doing yourselves a terrible harm and the Israeli hawkish stand is doing you a terrible thing. A by-product of the Israeli hawkish stand is that it's the first time in 100 years that you are facing the very grave risk of going out of the American national consensus. And it's a very grave risk that the Israeli Government is taking and American Jews. . . .

Q. You're suggesting anti-Semitism?

A. No, no. American Jews were within the limit of the national consensus during most of the Zionist enterprise over the last eighty years, until maybe a few years ago. Now we are pushing you to the edge of an abyss for no good reason. We are playing on the guilt feelings of American Jews, filling them with horrible equations that PLO are Nazis, Arafat is Hitler, the Covenant is *Mein Kampf*, the whole thing is annihilation. So if PLO are Nazis—and all Palestinians, or most, say they are PLO—then the whole syndrome in American Jews creates terrible guilt feelings. We in Israel are playing on the annihilation syndrome.

And so American Jews are saying, what the hell, we are sitting in the nice villas, the suburbs of New York or Connecticut and these people are going to be annihilated. But this is not true! We are not going to be annihilated. We are the strongest military power in the whole Middle East, and getting stronger.

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But, basically, the struggle is over two claims, each legitimate in its own terms, to the occupation of the same area of land. There was a time when Israel was willing to take half, if it could be left alone, but the Arabs said no. Now the Palestinians seem willing to take half, but the Israelis say no. In recent weeks I have sensed an increasing willingness on the part of Israelis to acknowledge openly that both claims have validity. My sense of the other side is that a majority of Arabs are reconciled to living with the Israeli claim because they have no choice. If it did anything, Sadat's visit legitimized the Israeli claim in Palestine within the Arab world. I don't think that Israelis have yet swallowed the concept of the sovereign Palestinian state, but I believe they are edging closer and closer to it. I think that before long the Palestinians will take it, too, with the conditions that Israel attaches to it.

What has happened since the Sadat visit is that, for the first time, pressures for concessions from both sides are being generated not only from the outside but internally. It is clear that Sadat as peacemaker is at least the match of his "rejectionist" adversaries in the Arab world, but it is unclear whether he has the power to force a settlement on them. It is also evident, I think, that the Israeli doves are gradually gaining the upper hand in Israel, though one does not know how much influence they can have within the framework of the Begin leadership. They may, instead, have to seek to destroy it. Both Egypt and Israel compete for American approval but, since providing the dynamism which brought Sadat and Begin together, the United States has had rather little to offer. The reality of the Sadat-Begin embrace is that each is now the dependent of the other. What Sadat gets from Begin will determine the future of his influence in the Arab world. What Begin bargains from Sadat will determine whether his government survives. Sadat is now more dependent on Begin than he is on Saudi Arabia; Begin is more dependent on Sadat than on the United States.

Most important is that the deadly cycle of chest-pounding hostility has now been broken. The leaders of the two countries, by a process which once seemed unimaginable, have maneuvered themselves into a position where self-interest requires them both to come home with peace. That is new in the Middle East. Begin and Sadat may even succeed. □

CRACKS IN AT&T's MONOPOLY

MA BELL SHOWS HER TEETH

LARRY LIGHT

American Telephone & Telegraph Co., which has grown monstrously large with its stranglehold on this nation's telecommunications, is running scared. The mammoth phone company is being shown up by a host of smaller, savvier competitors in the highly lucrative fields of business switchboards and inter-city corporate private lines. So AT&T is fighting—hard and dirty.

Numerous AT&T rivals say that it uses its economic might—company assets come to $86 billion—for anti-competitive ends. They accuse Bell of secretly subsidizing some of its equipment in order to underprice them. And they say AT&T has tried to scare off a number of their potential customers by threatening a loss of Bell contracts. Since the world's largest corporation needs huge amounts of supplies, it can bring substantial pressure on everyone from the tire supplier to the paper-clip maker, dissuading them from buying non-Bell phone gear.

Partly because of these allegations, the U.S. Justice Department has launched an antitrust suit against AT&T. And simultaneously, AT&T is trying to ram through Congress a bill that would all but end its competition by raising to the force of law the concept of a Bell monopoly. The Bell bill has 105 co-sponsors in the House and nine in the Senate. And that's not surprising considering that, by its own admission, the Corporation has spent more than $2.2 million lobbying for the measure.

The crack in the Bell System's monopoly first appeared in 1968 when the Federal Communications Commission permitted a firm named Carterfone to attach its own phone equipment to the AT&T network. The Carterfone decision encouraged some 400 other so-called "interconnect" firms to enter the phone terminal market. And while it's true that heavyweight concerns like Stromberg-Carlson and RCA are now getting into the act, the contest between the interconnects and AT&T is still largely an affair of David and Goliath.

The interconnects sell—not rent, as does Bell—equipment like switchboards, key phones and extensions, mainly to business customers. As every homeowner knows, buying can have great advantages over renting. Purchase a switchboard and you build up equity in it. Its value may decline over the years, but you can get back at least part of your investment when you resell it. Leasing from Bell gives you the pleasure of contributing indefinitely to AT&T's billion-dollar quarterly profits.

For a while, AT&T had a gimmick to make the opposition's financial advantage burn less brightly. It charged interconnect customers a monthly fee for hooking up to AT&T's national system of lines and switching stations. The fees paid for rental of fuse-like devices known as interfaces that Bell protested were needed to protect its network against any excess voltage from interconnect equipment. On a month-to-month basis, "that put us at

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a 10-to-15 percent price disadvantage," calculates Clark Walter, president of Executone N.J., Inc., a New Jersey-based interconnect. Walter and his fellow Bell challengers deny that interfaces were necessary. They scoff at the notion that their gear is so shoddily built as to throw off random jolts of electricity.

The FCC resolved the debate in the interconnects' favor, substituting federal certification of phone equipment for the controversial Bell fuses. AT&T, of course, appealed the decision in the courts, but last October the Supreme Court let the FCC order stand.

The Carterfone decision was followed in 1971 by another landmark FCC ruling allowing competition into long-distance private lines, a second previously all-Bell preserve. These lines enable businesses with offices in two cities to make unlimited calls between them for a flat monthly fee. Bell found it harder to dig claws into the private-line competitors because they weren't forced to depend on the AT&T network, as are the interconnects. The private-line competitors can transmit by microwave, a detour that the FCC later made more attractive when it let them bounce their messages off satellites.

AT&T's competition usually outclasses Bell in marketing and technical virtuosity. The challengers, for instance, were the first to produce switchboards that could perform such electronic tricks as ringing a person's extension when the busy number he just called became free. The difference between the fat near monopoly and the hungry small fry is best illustrated by the classic story involving Continental Airlines. In 1972, Continental asked Southwestern Bell to install a special switchboard system for its reservation service. The local Bell subsidiary, one of twenty-three nationwide, replied that it couldn't fill the order until 1980. Collins Radio put in the desired system by April 1974.

Nevertheless, Bell's bulk guarantees that it will remain a formidable foe. AT&T's empire encompasses the Long Lines Department (serving more than 90 percent of the long-distance calls in America), Bell Labs (its research arm) and Western Electric (which builds almost all Bell equipment). The system employs more than a million people, making it second only to the federal government as an employer. Its 3 million stockholders outnumber those of any other U.S. company.

The phone company argues that its scope is necessary to insure the orderly delivery of a vital service. It points to the Communications Act of 1934, which is the foundation of U.S. telecommunications policy, as its justification for having a monopoly. The company ignores the fact that the 1934 Act calls on the phone industry as a whole—not AT&T in particular—to furnish the public "a rapid, efficient, nationwide and worldwide wire and radio communications service with adequate facilities at a reasonable charge."

As a practical matter, Bell's subsidiaries have been granted exclusive charters to provide service in certain geographic areas. During the telephone's early days, several companies would serve the same territory and a customer was forced to subscribe to them all if he wished to call everywhere in town. Bell now handles 82 percent of the calling areas in this country; the rest are served by 1,600 supposedly independent phone companies in rural areas where Bell doesn't want to run its lines. These companies all depend on AT&T's long-distance network and on Western Electric for their hardware. (No interconnect can mass-produce handsets the way Western can, hence the huge residential market is left to Bell.) As a result, the rural phone companies generally

Oliphant, The Denver Post

"Hello . . . Yes, This Is He . . . They're Trying to Break Up What? . . . and If I Don't Intervene You'll Cut Off My Service? . . . Well, I . . ."

side with AT&T in its dispute with the interconnects and private-line firms.

It is one thing for Bell to take the chaos out of phoning a friend one county away; it is quite something else for it to insist on controlling all aspects of telecommunications. Bell's competitors like to draw an analogy between electric utilities and AT&T. Electric companies provide only generating stations and power lines, not appliances like refrigerators and fluorescent lights. So why, they ask, can't Bell be satisfied with furnishing switching stations and phone lines, and stop trying to hog the switchboard and private-line business?

Bell replies with the scare-'em argument that residential phone rates will rise if its switchboard and private-line clientele continues to diminish. Business phone hardware, it claims, subsidizes residential rates. The company figures that the average residential subscriber pays $9 a month, although it costs Bell $16.50 to serve him. John DeButts, AT&T board chairman, puts it this way: "Were the telephone companies deprived entirely of the contribution of common costs that revenue from their more discretionary services provide, they would face the necessity of increasing the average customer's bill 75 percent."

That's misleading for two reasons: First, there are several cases on record where residential customers were found to be the ones doing the subsidizing. In these instances, Bell diverted residential-service revenue to its corporate-service accounts, thereby allowing it to make its switchboards and private-lines business more competitive. In Colorado and New York, utility regulatory agencies of each state forced Bell to raise its cor-

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porate rentals to more realistic levels. Second, even De-Butts acknowledges that his 75 percent residential-rate-boost bogey could happen solely under the most extreme circumstances. Bell would have to lose every shred of its business outside of residential service. And that's not a likely prospect.

The Justice Department's current antitrust suit, which aims to strip AT&T of Western Electric and perhaps of Long Lines, has small chance of success. Bell has been a repeated antitrust target in the past and no government action has ever managed to check its growth, let alone dismember it. The previous antitrust suit, filed against Bell in 1949, sought, as does the present one, the divestiture of Western Electric. After a seven-year legal bout, the giant emerged with Western Electric still in its thrall.

In addition, Bell's competitors, for all their gains, nonetheless can claim less than 1 percent of the revenue in the telecommunications market. A mere fraction of AT&T's turf—the 12 percent that makes up its corporate clientele—is vulnerable to competition. In terms of time, effort and financing, an interconnect is better off selling one switchboard to a big corporation than it is selling several hundred residential phones. Besides, the demand for corporate telecommunications is growing steadily, the competitors say, and they'll have a hard enough time keeping up with the expanding market.

Yet despite its continued enviable position, AT&T is throwing everything it can into getting the Bell bill through Congress. The bill (actually a number of bills that are basically the same) was introduced in last year's Congress, was resubmitted in this year's and is now in the Senate and House Communications Subcommittees.

AT&T's challengers are aghast at the Bell bill. "We won't stand a prayer if they get that thing through," says Walter of Executone. It would make AT&T immune from antitrust laws that prevent it from buying out its new competitors. Regulation of phone equipment would be transferred from the FCC to the states, leaving a small switchboard manufacturer the task of facing AT&T opposition in front of fifty different agencies. State regulatory bodies are chronically understaffed and woefully susceptible to the overpowering expertise that Bell can marshal.

As if that weren't sufficient to load the dice in AT&T's favor, the Bell bill would establish in law the principle that any duplication of private lines is wasteful and thus contrary to the public interest. AT&T challengers would be forced to prove to the FCC that their services weren't already being offered by Bell. Surely, none would be able to keep its license. To make sure Bell is completely covered, the bill also would require that someone who came up with an innovation not offered by Bell—it often happens—must prove that AT&T couldn't possibly duplicate the feature. Ever.

While it waits for Congress to move, Bell is punching hard in day-to-day competition with its smaller rivals. The secret subsidy ploy, mentioned earlier, is the company's favorite way of fighting the pricing advantage that purchased equipment enjoys.

"They drove me out of business with predatory pricing," charges Kenneth Johnson, whose New Jersey interconnect outfit, Communications Design, went bust in 1976. Four other New Jersey interconnects have filed a complaint before the state's Public Utilities Commission that Bell is leasing a sophisticated new switchboard, the Dimension, at unrealistically low rates, intending thus to push them under. Regulatory bodies in sixteen other states have received the same type of protests.

In the New York case cited previously, that state's Public Service Commission shed some light on Bell's accounting shuffles. The PSC discovered that income from corporate leasing in reality fell short of covering its own costs by 61 percent. This let New York Telephone, an AT&T subsidiary, undercharge its corporate trade. Residential customers were the goats who unwillingly financed this slick operation. The PSC ordered a hefty 25 percent hike in Bell's rental rates to business.

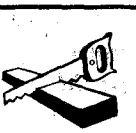
According to MCI Corp., a private-line firm, Bell underprices its private lines as well, with the help of long-distance call revenue. In 1974, MCI says, Bell's long-distance income exceeded FCC-authorized levels by $190 million—a sum that was channeled to its private-line group, which had fallen short of its ceiling by almost the same figure.

Bell's tactics can be even more ruthless. Many of its competitors tell of threats that Bell representatives made to frighten sales prospects tempted to leave the AT&T fold. The experience of Barry Glick, president of Glictronix of Clifton, N.J., is typical. Two years ago, Glick was about to sell a phone system to a Newark office supplies firm that regularly did business with New Jersey Bell. When it got wind of the pending defection, Glick says, New Jersey Bell threatened to buy office supplies elsewhere. The office supplier kept its Bell switchboard.

Bell officials concede that threats occasionally are issued, but ascribe them to overenthusiastic salesmen. Yet hearings in 1974 before the Senate Antitrust and Monopoly Subcommittee cited more than 200 instances of threats nationwide. Each time Bell had a lame excuse.

C.M. Huntley of Continental Airlines testified that, after his company bought its own phone hardware, a Southwestern Bell employee told a Houston travel agent not to book Bell executives on Continental flights. Bell said the employee had gone against company policy. And when Truckweld of Seattle went to the interconnects, Pacific Northwest Bell stopped sending its trucks there for work, thus ending a business relationship that began in 1956, J.W. Massick, company president, told the committee. Bell blamed the Truckweld curtailment on a coincidental mothballing of part of its truck fleet due to the slow economy.

As long as AT&T maintains its power, things like this will go on. For in the technological wonderland of telecommunications, Ma Bell is the despot Queen of Hearts. When she cries. "Off with their heads," upstarts know she means it. □



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BOOKS & THE ARTS

'Fabulous, My Life,' Not So Fabulous

DELMORE SCHWARTZ: The Life of an American Poet. *By James Atlas. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 418 pp. $15.*

ERIK WENSBERG

Looked at askance, biography seems to unite crime, conviction and hard labor. That it is a trespass on privacy goes without saying, and in our time the art leaves nothing unsaid; but its knack of distortion is more broadly mischievous, sentencing as it can the living or the dead, for years, for decades, or for all time, to inhabit a funny-face snapshot the world knows is true, for it saw it in print. The biographer's own, contrary conviction is that he can in fact—against all that experience teaches—get at the truth, the whole truth, with but another month's inquiry, another week's thought. The delusion is fortunate: the biographer must *know too much.* For his knowing sets limits on the scope for distortion, and his quest extenuates the eventual misdeed; or so he thinks. It follows that the labor is enormous.

But this is true of all history. The biographer's peculiar goad, his bid to shine, comes in doing his best by just one person. Where the historian is in a general way hard-working, conscientious, the good biographer, while honest, is personally attentive and loyal; his is a friendship that hopes to edify. And so it should, if we value human lives; and if, as we assume, the biographer has taken up a subject whose work in the world is misunderstood, or whose life embodied or contradicted his times, or who simply lived—is it harder now?—what used to be called a rattling good yarn. In his remarkable biography of the poet, critic, and storyteller Delmore Schwartz, James Atlas has befriended a subject of roughly the second sort, has beyond doubt inquired everywhere and thought long, and has written a book as fair, full and sympathetic as its subject may have had any right to hope for. Atlas's facts have the feel of the indisputable, and his judgments are generous. Generously too, he has not put everything in, just to show he knows it, nor tried to claim weeks from the reader's life because his subject claimed years from his. Most admirable of all, Atlas—known until now as a scholarly reviewer—has maintained both sympathy and poise throughout a complex narrative which eventually becomes thoroughly terrifying.

On its face, the story of Delmore Schwartz resembles the old enraging story of genius brought low, which it is. A son of Romanian Jewish immigrants, this exceptionally gifted, handsome young philosophy student—"electric," "magical" to his friends—blazed upon the New York literary scene in 1937 at the age of 24 with a masterpiece, a perfect short story called "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," with which the editors of *Partisan Review* chose to open the first issue of that then-reviving and, almost at once, disproportionately influential little magazine. Further back in the issue stood contributions by Edmund Wilson, Wallace Stevens, Lionel Trilling, James Agee and Pablo Picasso. I believe no one minded the precedence. Schwartz's first book, published two years later, included and took its title from that story but was a book of poems—and John Crowe Ransom, R.P. Blackmur, Mark Van Doren and Wallace Stevens were only a few of those who heaped it with praise: Schwartz was favorably compared with the young Auden, the young Eliot, the young Pound. There followed his translation of Rimbaud's *Une Saison en Enfer,* a verse play called *Shenandoah,* a book-length poem called *Genesis,* a collection of stories called *The World Is a Wedding,* two Guggenheim grants, another book of poems called *Vaudeville for a Princess,* a selected poems, the Bollingen Prize, and a last book of stories, *Successful Love.* In the meantime Schwartz had taught at Harvard seven years, Princeton and Syracuse for several more, had been an editor of *Partisan Review,* poetry editor and movie reviewer for *The New Republic,* and published more than 100 critical articles, of which *Selected Essays of Delmore Schwartz,* published posthumously, reprints many of the finest. In 1966, at 53, Schwartz died of a heart attack, alone, mad and broke, in a Times Square fleabag.

Louis Simpson has told Schwartz's life briefly elsewhere to show how harshly America treats its poets. It does. For most of his life, Schwartz had a terrible time getting money but a worse time finding fame. A serious biographer must talk about money, and Atlas is vivid in describing the effects upon Schwartz of a phantom inheritance leeched away at law—and the contrasting solution of another young first-generation American Jewish poet, Paul Goodman, awaiting fame indolently in the 1930s in Washington Heights, exquisite on his live-in sister's paycheck. Schwartz loathed Goodman's homosexual side as much as he feared his own; but he must also have envied such apparent repose. As for fame, after "In Dreams," Schwartz's achievement went resolutely backwards—as did its subject matter.

For besides being a greatly gifted poet and critic, Schwartz soon enough became a megalomaniac of staggering unpleasantness, a self-promoter manic and whining by turns, an injurious gossip, inert in love, and a boor. His monstrous self-reference grew piecemeal but is already amply evident in the imperious letters quoted here from his first year in college. *Shenandoah* and *Genesis* (no modest title) are nothing less (and in the opinion of many, nothing more) than grandiloquent tellings of his own bitter, ordinary family life in epic style. "Fabulous, my life," he once exulted, and in an abstract, demented way he seems to have needed to believe it. Concretely, his adult life became a torment which only fame of the most personal, fanciful kind could have ransomed. His translation of Rimbaud was a breathtaking presumption on schoolboy French—and he resented the critics' anger. In *The World Is a Wedding,* all but two stories were again of his life, his disorderly immigrant family, his apparently boring literary friends; the stories are unreadable today in what even William Barrett, his most moving eulogist, now calls Schwartz's "self-complacency." The eminent authors who endorsed the book with blurbs impress Atlas, but signify to me only benign literary logrolling. Among the reviews, Atlas endorses the one that speaks of "the definitive portrait of the Jewish middle class in New York in the depression."

Before long the poetry became uneven, and Byzantine strategies to obtain grants and positions began to fail. Teaching, writing, sending letters, pulling strings, Schwartz obsessively bemoans the failure of what he calls, with an odd

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sort of passive detachment, his "hopes." He is not famous, and his books don't sell well. He cannot be alone. Is he disliked at Harvard for being disagreeable or for being a Jew? What is wrong with his "character"? (For one thing, his divorced mother is a ruthless, wary user, his father shady and flattering.) Insomniac, Schwartz falls into heavy drinking; barbiturates and amphetamines are soon bafflingly entangled with his own manic-depressive bent; by the 1950s he is downing handfuls of Dexedrine a day, and making ever more grueling scenes. One marriage has long since ended in divorce, and a second one will end, after unstoppable emotional violence, when the whole unsteady mind fissures and re-forms, as in a movie effect, into classic paranoia: there is a Rockefeller plot; there are voices, a private eye, the shaming hospitals. In the end, Schwartz drove off every friend he could, almost carefully. A near stranger, James Jones, paid a hospital bill.

It is a harrowing story, and to his credit as a scholar Atlas insists against it (as Dwight Macdonald and William Barrett also have) on all that was fecund, witty and original in Schwartz's youth, and in the rare contented periods. Not surprisingly, it is difficult to take that part in. Then too, caught as we often are in the anguish of Schwartz's private journals—the journals of even the sturdiest writers can be horridly claustral—it is difficult to remember that such notes would have been set down beside a draft of one of Schwartz's acute and eloquent essays. About those essays, by the way, I join Louis Simpson and the late Philip Rahv in the unpopular hunch that criticism was or became Schwartz's true vocation. He belittled it.

In minor ways Atlas can seem to have been standing too close. He speaks of Schwartz being a "success," "celebrated," even "famous" after "In Dreams" appeared in *Partisan*. The view is parochial, and Schwartz almost certainly shared it, which was part of the trouble. Conversely, Atlas seems to take for granted the historical place and character of *Partisan Review*, including the intellectual violence that flickered through its early issues and often singed the social relations of those around it. Historically, the *Partisan* reviewers imported from the tendentious Stalinist-Trotskyist Left into more straightforward commentaries a combative, impatient, scornful tone, and standards honed to the sword's edge. Those around the magazine who stood, like Schwartz, within one generation of the turn-of-the-century Jewish immigration, brought as well a headlong romanticism spiked with no little revolutionary fell dispatch and East-European hysterics. All this was brought to the huge work of undercutting the mounting proletarian wave in letters, genteel history, and the infection of Stalinism, in favor of anti-Stalinist radicalism and modernist art and literature. It was unheard of labor for a little magazine, and the credit *Partisan* is owed in its accomplishment may make the magazine unique in American publishing history.

But *Partisan* may also have been no place for an incipient paranoiac who knew nothing of the world (his mother said trust nobody; it worked) and who did not know how to behave or how to grow up. Recurrent words can be telling, and in his fiction, Schwartz's use of "attack," a word prominent then and now in the lexicons of *Partisan* veterans, comes to cover alike a playful question and a head-on insult. As *Partisan* published more and more criticism and less and less poetry and fiction, Schwartz composed—at any rate published—accordingly. In a great many ways, he never left home.

Atlas thinks more highly of the body of Delmore Schwartz's work than I do, and knows more of it. I hope he can be persuaded to edit it (by which he would know that I mean choose, not change) for a new edition. There are superb poems, and the story "The Statues" approaches the greatness of "In Dreams." In the meantime, a roughly concurrent book gives rise to the image I finished this book with. In his magisterial *World of Our Fathers*, Irving Howe closes by reviewing the careers of quite a number of American writers and thinkers who themselves or through their parents shared the Jewish immigrant experience, and from its perils and contradictions fashioned lasting works. Meyer Schapiro, Paul Goodman, Harold Rosenberg, Sidney Hook, Lionel Trilling, Howe himself are among those who clearly belong in that sum. I hope the critic James Atlas will elsewhere show fully that Delmore Schwartz was more than a remainder. Atlas the biographer has written an exemplary book about an appalling life. □

Making Do with the Here and Now

FRANK O'HARA: Poet Among Painters. *By Marjorie Perloff. Braziller. 234 pp. $12.50.*

J.D. O'HARA

In the Eternal City's *quartier des artistes* Frank O'Hara shares a building with Ronald Firbank, Oscar Wilde, Irvin Graham, Noel Coward, Aubrey Beardsley, and (since irrelevant overtones seem to be heard) Ernest Hemingway and E.E. Cummings. Thorne Smith is the doorman. The Museum of Perpetually Modern Art is just down the block, across from the bookstore. The street is closed to traffic.

The point is double: O'Hara is a minor poet, limited in skills and interests, the committer of an enormous output of which much is flawed and trivial. But he is is also charming, amusing, touching, life-enhancing, and lots of other -ing things that emphasize his affectiveness, his ability to involve readers emotionally and imaginatively in the events staged by his poetic sensibility.

That seems enough praise for anyone in a time when Robert Lowell's attempts to be a moral and intellectual Voice are being subjected to some harsh posthumous criticism, when Wallace Stevens is being twisted into a spokesman for the Higher Rationalism, and when William Carlos Williams's sweet inanities are nearing off-campus beatification. Yet the past is difficult to shake off, and for readers of poetry the legacy most difficult to refuse is that of Important Meaning. Homer shaped Greek thought, the *Aeneid* was essential to Caesar Augustus, Dante was both deep and exalted . . . and by some devious illogic it follows that now every poet must have a philosophy, an aesthetic, an ethical system, and socially redeeming value.

Sometimes, admittedly, O'Hara himself tried for such significance, but usually he kept his head to himself. Of Lowell's "confessional manner" he said, characteristically, that it "lets him get away with things that are really just plain bad but you're supposed to be interested because he's supposed to be so upset." *Supposed* gets to the heart of the matter: certain tones and topics impose a traditional obligation on writers and readers alike. But O'Hara was a truly modern person, and he saw no salvation in the Higher Meanings, especially spiritual ones. It's not surprising, then, that Keats should trouble him. (In his best-known photograph, by Kenward Elmslie, O'Hara's pose echoes

The O'Haras who can (Frank, John, Mary, Kim, Scarlett), do; J.D. O'Hara (no relation) teaches at the University of Connecticut.

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Keats's in Charles Brown's drawing.) Allen Ginsberg, with whom O'Hara maintained a prickly friendship, similarly irritated him: both express immortal yearnings, while O'Hara had only the here, the now, and the self. As he said in "To Bob Rauschenberg":

Yes, it's necessary, I'll do
what you say, put everything
aside but what is here. . . .
what should I be
if not alone in pain, apart from
the heavenly aspirations of
Spenser and Keats and Ginsberg,
who have a language that permits
them truth and beauty, double-coin?

O'Hara often mentions the Romantic poets, especially Byron, perhaps the first poet reduced, by the absence of external stability and eternal truth, to his own sensibility. This reduction is not always pleasant, as O'Hara makes clear in the appropriately sour poem "Mayakovsky":

Now I am quietly waiting for
the catastrophe of my personality
to seem beautiful again,
and interesting, and modern.

Less bleakly put, what life afforded him, at best, was not religious or philosophic insight, not a View of the Whole, but only "Grace/ to be born and live as variously as possible," and skill to report that variously complex life vividly and evocatively. A central feature of it, celebrated and mourned in public and private poems, is love:

. . . it is our nature, nothing
inspires us but the love we want upon
the frozen face of earth

and utter disparagement turns into
praise as generations read the mes-
sage
of our hearts in adolescent closets who
once shot at us in doorways

or kept us from living freely because
they were too young then to know
what they would ultimately need from
a barren and heart-sore life

His life also included the disciplined excitements of painting, poetry and music as well as the aesthetic and sensual delights of New York City and the dozens of artists with whom he was intimate. They include Kenneth Koch, John Ashbery, and three other poets—James Schuyler, Edward Field and Barbara Guest—with whom he was lumped as "the New York School," a title as fatuous as "the Lake Poets." More important to him were the avant-garde visual artists —Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Willem de Kooning, Larry Rivers and a swarm of others, with Jackson Pollock's ghost hovering above. O'Hara spent half his life with MOMA, the Museum of Modern Art, and he wrote voluminously about artists—books, articles, program notes, reviews, interviews, introductions and poems.

He was also one of the first poets to pick up on popular culture—not Williams's fatherly patronizing of the common folk or Eliot's carefully scrubbed allusions ("the ballad . . . was reported to me from Sydney, Australia") but the direct use of specific details of street life, pop songs, movies ("To the Film Industry in Crisis" is one of his best poems), and ordinary life including his own. ("At the Old Place," in which he and some friends bug out of a dull bar and go dancing, is a marvel of happy charm.)

Although not in Emily Dickinson's league, O'Hara was prodigiously prolific. The *Collected Poems* (Knopf) and two later collections (Grey Fox Press) contain almost 900 poems (more remain), and these plus some hundred prose works, plays, collaborations with artists, and so on, make an implicit claim to Importance, a claim repeated by O'Hara's recent popularity as a poetic model. Now Prof. Marjorie Perloff of USC, author of studies of Yeats and Lowell, has written the first book-length examination of O'Hara's verse.

The study is brief, it focuses especially on his relations with painters, it touches lightly on his interest in such foreign poets as Reverdy, Mayakovsky and Apollinaire, and it makes discreet use of biographical materials. Faced with the vast heap of verse, Perloff labors to categorize it. She divides O'Hara's use of painting in his poetry into three parts, for instance: imitation of a painter's style; use of "an allusion to artists or works of art as a touchstone for grounding and authenticating a particular mood," and "meditations on particular paintings with the intent of 'translating' the tone of the painting into a verbal medium." Another chapter offers other categories: "The 'Surreal-Autobiographical' Poem"; "Poems for Emergent Occasions: The 'I do this, I do that' Poem"; "Odes" and "Love Poems." Such categories tend to remind the reader of those imagined by Jorge Luís Borges for an overlapping and evasive Chinese encyclopedia; but one must sympathize with Perloff. In the huge sprawl of O'Hara's poetic corpus "the squirming facts exceed the squamous mind, if one may say so. And yet relation appears. . . ." Such baggy categories may be the only way to deal with the poems, short of individual exegesis.

And exegesis is not Perloff's forte, for various reasons. She is uninterested in O'Hara's own ideas about his poetry, for one thing. (She refers at least five times to his "Personism" essay, but never notices its useful main point, "to address itself to one person . . ., thus evoking overtones of love without destroying love's life-giving vulgarity.") For another, she longs for meanings, although she knows that she shouldn't. She can speak of O'Hara's characteristic style nonjudgmentally: "like the 'all-over' painting, an O'Hara lyric often seems intentionally deprived of a beginning, middle, and end." But then she forgets that this style is O.K. and complains of a group of poems that "can start or stop anywhere, that accommodate almost anything the poet happens to want to record."

This yen for meaning leads her to some odd judgments, as when she observes that "unlike some of the early plays . . ., which are merely silly, *The General Returns* has shrewd and funny things to say about East-West relations" —not a subject on which O'Hara had much expertise. Discussing a well-known poem she observes that "the poet's ruminations are 'Meditations in an Emergency' not '*on* an Emergency'—an important distinction for it suggests that the self, no longer able to detach itself from the objects it perceives, dissolves and becomes part of the external landscape." This is hanging a lot of meaning on that *in*; and unfortunately the *Collected Poems* quotes O'Hara as saying that Kenneth Koch "had to talk me out of 'Meditations on an Emergency.'"

A painful instance of this search for meaning involves the first line of perhaps O'Hara's best-known poem, "The Day Lady Died." "When one says, 'It is 12:20 in New York,'" Perloff observes, "one is recognizing that numbers no longer have any mystical significance." Here even lack of meaning becomes meaningful, as if O'Hara were defying a tradition of meaningful clock times. But this meaning is not enough; it leads Perloff to the general observation that "his poetic world is one of immanence rather than transcendence; persons and places, books and films are named because they are central to O'Hara's particular consciousness, but they have no 'inner reality.'" Here the notion of "inner reality" is sadly opaque, especially since Perloff opposes it to "immanence," a term that means approximately "inner reality." Meanwhile the question why a poem about Billie Holiday's death should cause O'Hara to announce the meaningful absence of mystic numbers remains.

Perloff is at her best when she keeps the poems at a distance. When she compares "The Day Lady Died" with some of its host of imitations, she puts the matter nicely: "Comparing the model to its offshoots, one can appreciate, more

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than ever, O'Hara's exquisite modulations of tone, his split-second dissolves, his time shifts, syntactic displacements, and emotional resonances. . . ." That's finely said. But her close look at the poems is only workmanlike. She says nothing about the poem's fine shared death on the day when Lady died, a death imposed on us all in the poem's last memory of her singing:

> *. . . while she whispered a song along the keyboard*
> *to Mel Waldron and everyone and I stopped breathing.*

Discussing the many allusions to Europe in the poem, she explains that although Billie Holiday was "quintessentially American" "her great voice transcends what she is in life, linking her to the poets, dramatists and artists cited in the first part, to *Le Balcon and Les Nègres*, to Gauloises and Strega." What kind of Europe-worship is this, that one needs great artistry to rise to the level of Strega and Gauloises?

But it's not only a matter of difficulty over details; no one can specify all the detailed achievements of a good poem. O'Hara, mocking bad art critics, said that *New York Times* art critic John Canaday's specialty was "the wise-suspicion-of-esthetic-hoax strategy." For all her willingness to admire O'Hara's poems, Perloff often falls back on a variation of this. Speaking of "Why I Am Not A Painter," for instance, she tells us that "on a second reading, it becomes clear that the poem is a profound jest. If someone asks a stupid question, O'Hara implies, he deserves a stupid answer." But in fact the poem is quite serious, straightforward, witty and subtle. Similarly, when Perloff discusses Larry Rivers's painting "Washington Crossing the Delaware" and O'Hara's poem on the painting, she finds in both works "irreverence and amused contempt" for "the absurdity of what O'Hara, like Rivers, presumably regards as a non-event."

This is especially disturbing because she quotes Rivers about his painting, and the comments come from his interview with O'Hara. In that interview Rivers speaks of the well-known painting "by a coarse German 19th-century academician who really loved Napoleon more than anyone and thought that crossing a river on a late December afternoon was just another excuse for a general to assume a heroic, slightly tragic pose." To Emanuel Leutze's melodramatic unreality Rivers opposes his own view: "What *I* saw in the crossing was quite different. I saw the moment as nerve-racking and uncomfortable. I couldn't picture anyone getting into a chilly river around Christmas time with anything resembling hand-on-chest heroics."

Perloff misreads all this badly (and misquotes it: among other errors she bafflingly changes *with* to *without*), and she misreads the painting and the poem too. This kind of carelessness appears often. Discussing a poem about Grace Hartigan, Perloff remarks that O'Hara "seems to identify even with the figures in Grace's paintings." But her own note points out that O'Hara posed for those figures; of course he identifies with them. Similarly, Perloff's inaccurate description of the poem-painting "Hand" and her misquotation of "Homage to Kenneth Koch" can be set against her book's reproduction of those works. Her close readings of poems are often marred by similar inaccuracies and contradictions (especially her reading of "Music"), and her discussions of art are unreliable.

O'Hara attributes to Pollock's "White Light" "a blazing, acrid, and dangerous glamour of a legendary kind" and compares it to writhing volcanoes. Perloff quotes this and then paraphrases it, changing the title and speaking of "the brooding languor of 'White Paint.'" Elsewhere she remarks that "Rivers's aesthetic turns out to be remarkably close to O'Hara's despite their very different backgrounds." Amazingly, by "backgrounds" she means that "Rivers came from a poor Jewish family" in the Bronx and O'Hara from "the provincial Catholic milieu of Baltimore and Grafton, Mass. . . . or even the sophisticated world of the Museum of Modern Art." Apparently she expected the two men to acquire their aesthetics as early and unconsciously as they acquired their regional accents; and it never occurs to her that O'Hara might have learned his from Rivers, a close friend, and that they had common artist-heroes.

Well, it's often a useful book. It lays out the territory, names names and places, and suggests profitable approaches to the poems. It must be used with care, though, and the reader will be obliged to test not only its judgments but its statements of fact. □

Cruel Sport, and Little More

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO BILLY. *By Chuck Ashman. Introduction by Rod McKuen. Lyle Stuart, Inc. 240 pp. $8.95.*

JACK MILES

Of H.L. Mencken it could be said that though a slouch at catching bears, he was a master at baiting them. And of bearbaiting itself, it could be said that those who like that sort of thing tend to like it very much. In *The Gospel According to Billy*, Chuck Ashman is engaged in a kind of bearbaiting, his hounds let slip on Mencken's own favorite bruin: red-necked, sweat-soaked, hymn-singing, sin-busting American Evangelical Christianity. If you like this sort of thing, you may like Ashman very much, but then again you may not. Let me explain.

Ashman's book is investigative reporting in the sense that Victor Lasky's *It Didn't Start with Watergate* is investigative reporting. That is, all of it—or nearly all of it—has appeared in print before. Ashman does not give his citations in full, but neither does he trouble to hide the fact that he relies on other reporters. Gathering their findings between the covers of one book may be a service of a sort, but the jacket-line promise of exposé, of now-for-the-first-time, is not fulfilled. Worse, on the eve of the publication of *The Gospel According to Billy*, two real scandals, the first ever to touch Graham, were hitting the papers, and Ashman missed them both. There was, first, the story of an alleged $23 million Graham slush fund and, second, there were charges that parts of Graham's latest book, *How to Be Born Again*, had been plagiarized from his earlier *World Aflame*. The plagiarism charge may be one that only publishing-house lawyers can appreciate, but then the charges against Bert Lance were charges that only banking lawyers could appreciate. The point is that venality and hypocrisy are not crimes, plagiarism is. A real investigative reporter would have been on Graham's case more closely than Ashman has been. So if you would like to see this bear properly baited, you may want to wait for another book.

Ashman's base is Los Angeles, and an Angeleno of my acquaintance smiles a little ruefully at the mention of his name. "Investigative reporter?" he asks, "Is that what they're calling him now? And what are the other reporters? I thought all reporting was investigation." He's right: the phrase "investigative reporter" is a tautology. There is no denying what I.F. Stone taught us; namely,

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that information can be in print and still be lost for practical purposes. On the other hand, "investigative" in some current reporting stands less for archive-prowling than for a free ride on a certain truculence of tone, a certain impatience with answers that cannot quickly be fitted to the question, "What's your angle?" Ashman reports no interviews of his own with Graham nor even any rebuffed attempts. There is, however, and let this epitomize his reportorial style, an interrogation of Billy Graham by Saint Peter. As Billy prepares to pass through the Pearly Gates, Saint Peter catches him out in a series of contradictory public statements. Worried, wondering whether to approve Billy's application, Saint Peter calls the Chief:

> Chief: No, no—it wouldn't look good to turn him down now. Approve it, but do me a favor, will you?
> Peter: Haven't I always?
> Chief: Assign him to the evangelistic division and keep him on the road. I don't want him hanging around the office. We have enough trouble with reporters as it is.

One smiles, but the truth is that neither the Chief nor Billy has much to fear at the hands of a reporter who has to make up his interviews.

Graham may find it a lapse of taste that his letters to his wife turn up in Ashman's book:

> Like a kid at his first major-league baseball game, Billy sent wide-eyed letters back [from a crusade in India] to Ruth in North Carolina.
>
> "Ruth, it was Wembley Stadium all over again! All you could hear was the tramp, tramp, tramp of bare feet and sandaled feet, as they were coming forward quietly and reverently . . . you could hear a pin drop . . . to receive Christ!"

But the only genuinely embarrassing charge Ashman makes, one that was reprinted immediately in a number of gossip columns, is that Graham bribed the late gangster Mickey Cohen $10,000 to fake a "decision for Christ" at Graham's 1957 Madison Square Garden crusade. There is no checking the story now. Ashman got it from Cohen on his deathbed. But one does wonder whether the dying con, rising, as it were, for a last, command performance, didn't con the canny reporter worse than he conned the eager preacher. What a finale!

Either way, one has to pity the poor iconoclast in a world without icons, looking for clay feet on such ungolden idols as Billy G. And yet if Ashman would just drop the pose of reportage and come on as Mencken did, swinging from the heels and bellowing to the sky, he might find Billy a suitable target after all. Mencken's piece on the death of God—"Where is Marduk today? Where is Osiris? Who now speaks for Vishnu, or Ra? etc."—is still good for a laugh. Sure, the old lion was all sound and fury signifying nothing, but what sound! what fury! And it has to be so: take on any complex question in its full complexity, and you start saving your wind for the run: there's not much left for swinging and bellowing, not much for sound and fury. A man can only do so much. So then, let reporters report and baiters bait. The nation may need a little cruel sport more than it needs further unkind information. But let us not confound the one craft with the other.

Which leads me to a more elusive question, and perhaps to a third craft. Ashman's book ends with what he calls "The Official Billy Graham Score Card." In three columns, we have "Year," "City," and "Souls Allegedly Saved." The low figure is 1965, Dothan, Ala., 239 souls; the high figure 1963, Los Angeles, Calif., 36,487 souls. My question: what, precisely or even approximately, is being counted here? The phenomenon of born-again religion is a good deal broader than Billy Graham. Never mind taking us behind the scenes in the organization of stadium rental, media blitzing, and the like. What lies behind the salvation scene? Can one really talk about the Gospel according to Billy without talking about the Gospel? In terms those who are not born-again Christians or believers of any sort can understand, what is going on here?

I submit that literary people, the sort who read book reviews, may be excused if they approach the phenomenon of Christian salvation as they would an intensified literary experience. The story of Jesus, whatever else it is, is a story, and this story is available not just in cheap paperback but also in complimentary as-told-to. You can be as illiterate as a bushman, and if you attend a Billy Graham crusade, you will hear the story (told piecemeal and allusively perhaps) of a young, poor, unmarried, childless man, deserted by his best friends, repudiated by his religion, imprisoned, tortured, executed by a corrupt official, and buried in a borrowed tomb. Jesus was a failure, Billy will tell you, as low as could be, but God raised him up. God can raise you up too.

As the reader of a novel may "become" the protagonist in the reading, so the Christian "becomes" Christ when he participates in the Christian salvation myth. Novelists do not encourage readers to carry literary identification too far. More than one writer, I suspect, has been dismayed when devout readers brought him their lives for the leading. But Christian evangelists go that far

NAVAJO WOMAN

She screams and the crooked cliffs seem to answer,
gnarled, yellow fingers stretched above her head
like veins in sandstone, like trees of the canyon,
twisted by winds carrying the lost wail of
the dead ancestors she invokes on us.
One scream, and all is still.

—Stares, malignant,
covered in black velveteen as though the desert
were Alaska—that is where they crossed at first,
carrying the blue patch on the spine, children
on their backs.

We may not take her picture,
her niece explains, only for a dollar,
the going price on canyon character.
I hedge—

I can tell I'm growing older now—
wondering when my fingers turn to claws,
when my face erodes to gullies everywhere,
when I hiss instead of speak, then, who will
pay me for a passing photograph?

We are
now human in the same exacting world—
we may cheat each other when we have the chance,
and her picture hangs like a trophy in my room
above the desk, along the plaster crack.

William F. Daly

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and farther. They encourage a *permanent* suspension of disbelief and an identification with the hero that ends in fusion and real identity. In Saint Paul's formulation, "I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me." Nonbelievers, of course, deny the possibility of such an identity except in a psychological sense. Nominal believers, so long as their lives go well, are not likely to be interested in it. But for those who have finally and with adequate reason despaired of themselves (adequate reason is often available), it has a powerful appeal. Its onset is less a fresh way of looking at life than a fresh person to live it. In Christian language, it is being "born again."

Whether "born again" is just premodern language for a phenomenon that anthropology or psychology can describe in more accurate terms is a question that, in my opinion, cannot be answered conclusively either way. And yet it remains the key question. As it touches Graham, it forces us to ask this: supposing the most scandalous charges against him to be correct, has he been exploiting a weakness, or has he been abusing a power? And if he has been abusing a power, whose power has he been abusing? Ashman's willingness to dodge that question is what makes his book read, as it does, like a slow night on the Johnny Carson show: gags aplenty, but nervous gags, and nothing much, finally, to laugh at. □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

American abstract painting, unlike European, reveals a remarkable continuity of development from Abstract Expressionism to date—that is to say, for the past thirty years. If, instead of looking for innovations and masterpieces, we look for connections between the generations, the historical succession is evident. The canon was set in the late 1940s and 1950s, in two particularly influential forms. On one hand, there is the dynamic of the artist's gesture with materials, exemplified by Jackson Pollock, and on the other the authority of pictorial space as a field, defined by Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko. In one way or another, gestural and field painting have dominated almost all subsequent abstract painting.

Out of Pollock's gestural marks stain painting developed, in which paint was used in liquid form as a dye, flowing wetly, unimpeded by drawing or modeling (Morris Louis and Helen Frankenthaler). A group of younger artists systematized this mode, which got the name Lyrical Abstraction. The showers, the splatter, the runnels, the pools of paint combined flow dynamics (the behavior of liquids: viscosity, gravity) with personal gestures. However, the gestures, central to Pollock's original usage, lost their expressionist charge and became rococo, in the sense of being natural, like a grotto.

Out of the unified and uninflected spatial field of Newman and Rothko, Hard Edge painting developed: it was described at the time by Sidney Tillim as geometric art in the shadow of Abstract Expressionism. The large scale, the color intensity, the economy of incident, and the seamless surface of Frank Stella and Ellsworth Kelly derived from Abstract Expressionism, but the sharp contours of Euclidean forms derived from European geometric art. Parallel to Hard Edge was the emergence of Minimal sculpture, in which grids (Carl André's floor panels, Sol LeWitt's three-dimensional grids) were the equivalent of the holistic color planes of Newman and Rothko.

The Hard Edge paintings and the Minimal sculptures made a point of suspending the humanistic resonance of the Abstract Expressionists, even as they profited from their formal innovations. Frank Stella's insolent deadpan stance and Kelly's polite but icy distancing of contextual clues have been criticized as indifference, but that is wrong. Their "shallowness" was actually resistance to the ready-made glories of being an artist that followed the success of the Abstract Expressionist generation. This tough refusal of hackneyed prestige, shared with Jasper Johns, has been very influential: though salutary at the time, it has in its turn become oppressive. It has lead to the curious helplessness of American abstract painters before problems of signification.

Op art, which developed out of the aesthetic of Hard Edge, was based on linear forms, and Lyrical Abstraction, out of stain painting, was based on painterly display. However, both of these contrasted modes avoided content, one by putting optical stimulation of the spectator's reactions in place of reference, the other by freeing splashes and streaks from the traces of self-expression. In both cases the visual elements of the work of art were isolated from signifying functions.

If I am right, abstract painting is characterized by (*1*) conformity to precedent and (*2*) an attentuated significative function. The Abstract Expressionists neglected neither formality (in which they were innovative) nor expressiveness (in which they were traditional). Their art is the outcome of a desire for synthesis. Later abstract painting, though almost always derivative from some aspect of Abstract Expressionism, is never synthetic; it is reductive. It takes one of the multiple potentials of Pollock or Newman, clarifies it in isolation, and in so doing loses the sense of complex meaning.

All of which leads to the latest manifestation of abstract art, Pattern Painting. The term is John Perreault's for a kind of painting which combines the two modes, split off from their single source in Abstract Expressionism, Hard Edge and stain painting. The notion of order as a repetitive, nonhierarchic array, expressed in grids, comes from field painting via Minimal and Op art. The sensuality of pigment and lusciousness of color come from Lyrical Abstraction, ultimately from Pollock. Thus traces of process, open painterly marks, and evidence of planning, systematic grids, are combined. Is Pattern Painting another precedent-conscious phase of abstract art or is it at last an expansive, synthetic movement?

In the original article about "Action Painting," Harold Rosenberg defended his coinage against "apocalyptic wallpaper." Right now, apocalyptic wallpaper sounds great, and Rosenberg is stuck with the traditional antithesis that sets the *really* expressive against the *merely* decorative in art. A conjunction of the apocalypse and the decorative in 1951 was pejorative, but now artists have brought into painting precisely the repeats and the sweet colors once assumed to be incompatible with high art.

Pattern Painting was the theme of a recent exhibition by John Perreault at P.S.1, the studio and exhibition complex of the Institute for Art and Urban Resources in Long Island City. It is not easy to sample a developing trend in art, but Perreault did so admirably. What is required is curiosity to motivate the curator to visit studios in order to test a preliminary hunch about the unity of unsorted works. Once the recognition has occurred, the show must be presented without the false positivism that insists the tendency is the only legitimate course of action for artists. Thus tact is as important as timing, if the participants are not to feel their options are being circumscribed by a doctrinaire program. Such early sortings should be put on by museum curators who are in a position to cross gallery limits, but what curator in New York museums is capable of conceiving and carrying out such an enterprise?

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Perreault faces squarely the big question about the artists in his argument to restore meaning to abstract painting. He affirms the decorative means, the formal repeats, as themselves expressive. The basic fact of patterning, that it is repetitive, is described as "a direct product of counting, keeping track, remembering." Thus there is an implicit mnemonic function in pattern, emblematic of ordering the passage of days, tidal and solar cycles, anniversaries. In addition to pattern as the analogue of physical ordering (wallpaper as abacus), he proposes a craft analogy, implying quilts and weaving. This is the aspect of nostalgic imagery, inasmuch as the module is attached to the old domestic tasks, not the current practice, of women. In both cases pattern is treated as iconography, taken out of the impoverished significative role of recent abstract art. The next year or so will show if Perreault is right, whether this painting does transcend the historical limits of abstract painting. □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

Chapter Two is still another product of the Neil Simon industry (Imperial Theatre). At the last count, provided me some years ago by someone who should know, Simon earned something like $40,000 a week. By now the sum has probably mounted well beyond that figure. He deserves it; he furnishes the public what it wants. It wants to laugh.

On the opening night, however, I had the impression that the audience had not paid to laugh but had been paid to do so. To be sure, Simon has written some good "one-liners," but the audience appeared to gasp in anticipation of their coming. There was joy and gratitude (marked by applause) when they exploded. I also laughed occasionally, but as usual I can cite no more than one or two quips; I do not remember the others.

This play, mind you, is supposed to have a serious autobiographical content. It deals with George Schneider who admits to having written heaps of lucrative railway newsstand fiction and two "good" but unremunerative novels. A wife he dearly loved and lived with for twelve years has died. On his return from Europe, where he had gone to remember the past as well as to overcome his sorrow, he is still heartbroken. He isolates himself in his expensive apartment and tries to resume his writing. "I just finished 300 pages of my new novel," he says, "and I haven't thought of a story yet." (That is one of the lines I *do* remember.) Leo, his publicity-agent brother, tries to assuage George by fixing him up with dates with attractive females. To no avail; George remains disconsolate.

Then, of course, he encounters a divorced young woman, Jennie Malone, almost as relieved by her newly gained deliverance as George was grieved by the loss of his wife. As both Jennie and George are charming people, they fall in love. Despite Leo's cautionary advice, they hastily decide on marriage. That is the material of the first act.

Simon is in trouble with his second act. The honeymoon is a failure because George is haunted by recollections of his earlier honeymoon. Though he knows he shouldn't be, since he's crazy about her, he is irritated by Jennie. Deciding to leave her for a while, he undertakes a Hollywood picture assign-

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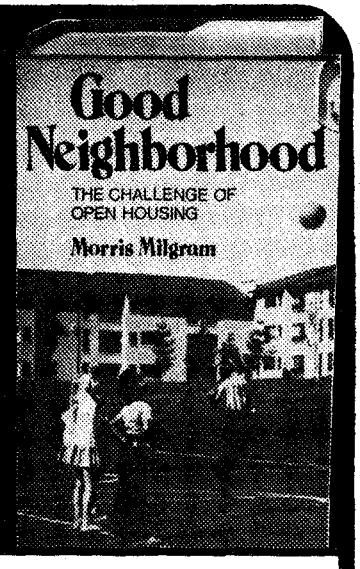

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THE HONEY SELLER
(Translated from Creole, W. Indies by Howard A. Norman)

I sit under
the ant climb
tree, and let my face
gloom.

Soon the honey seller
arrives
and says, "I see today
your soul is bitter!
Let me put honey on it.
There, now it's alright."

Too late! I give him a coin
without a word.

As he walks away I think,
Oh all the sweets
in the world:

The sea urchin cradles a plum
in black thorns.
Out of reach! I sadly laugh.

A drop of sap on each tip
of the shark's teeth.
Out of reach! I sadly laugh.

And now look,
these ants carry off my soul
and follow you home
honey seller, thief!

Paulé Bartón

ment. We know, as they know, that he will immediately return to her and that they will then be happy together. There never was any real impediment between them, although one is expected to assume that there was. The second act, therefore, is padded with an incident which concerns an unfulfilled affair between Leo and Jennie's married friend and confidante.

None of this holds water. The "pathos" of the main situation is a supposition: something we are supposed to accept for the sake of the fun. What cements the structure are the wisecracks, at which there is no doubt Simon is adept. These have nothing to do with true wit: they are smartened observations reflecting the audience's common assumptions—in short, clichés, cannily projected in surprising turns.

The cast helps a good deal to sustain the basic hoax of the play. Judd Hirsch is especially effective as George, particularly during the first act in his scenes with his brother, smoothly acted by Cliff Gorman. The give-and-take between them is casual American realism at its best, effortless and convincing in its nice-guy camaraderie. Hirsch on the verge of tears is as touching as the evening can ever become. Gorman has a little trouble with his lacrymose breakdown in the second act because there is nothing to break down about. Anita Gillette (Jennie) is stalwartly sweet. Ann Wedgeworth (her friend) is endowed with a voice which, nasally dry in delivery, always sounds a secret regret. Herbert Ross's direction is everything it needs to be.

In between other openings, I have seen several of the shows being given up to December 19 as a sort of festival by the Bunch of Experimental Theatres under the presidency of Richard Schechner and the executive direction of Mercedes Gregory. Among the groups who compose the Bunch (of eight) are Mabou Mimes, the Ontological-Hysterical Theatre, the Ridiculous Theatre Company, The Squat Theatre. (Also running are other off-Off-Broadway manifestations which are not part of this particular Bunch.)

Circumstances have not permitted me to see all the offerings (I plan to see more of them shortly), but I must say at once that, though I do not always enjoy everything being shown, I approve of their being done. I expect to contribute a general comment on these "experiments" in a future column.

Right now I simply wish to note that the Performance Group at its Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St., is engaged in a production of Seneca's *Oedipus*, adapted by Ted Hughes. It is one of the Bunch's more dramatically strenuous undertakings. □

DANCE

NANCY GOLDNER

First acquaintances are the most formative. From those whose first contact with Great Literature was Chaucer's "The Miller's Tale," Paul Taylor's *Aphrodisiamania* could have been the comic dance of all time. First performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music at the end of November, *Aphrodisiamania* is intended to be what literary folk call ribald. Even before the dance starts, the program screams intent, in the reference to *commedia dell'arte* in the dance's subtitle ("a macaronic imbroglio in the tradition of . . ."), and in the cast of characters: Isabella, the virgin; her father, Old Flatchio; the servants Linguini and Fetuchina (*sic*); General Havoc; The Good Sister Frigid, et al. Those in the know could also find a cue in the fact that this production is staged in collaboration with Charles Ludlam, director of the Ridiculous Theatre Company and champion of the ridiculously outrageous, especially when it comes to genitalia. With all respect to literary terminology, *Aphrodisiamania* is intended to be what a 4-year-old knows as the cockie-doody show.

There is one bit that approaches this sublime genre, when old Flatchio's inflamed penis turns into a hot potato and sends him, and it, hurtling around the place in search for something in which to quench it. The lead-up to the episode is neatly presaged via proper symbolism: a snake is revived by the same magic liquid Flatchio drinks. The denouement is also fitting: the nun bows before Flatchio's proud sword. Carry-over of images is stylish: General Havoc's real sword goes limp just as he is about to kill Isabella's more suitable suitor, Flavio; when for some reason or other Flavio wants to kill himself, the limp sword won't cooperate, thus enabling a happy ending. Morality and nicely tucked-in imagery make for good grades, but they can't carry the show. All they contribute is charm, and while charm is, well, charming, it's not funny.

Even the best of *Aphrodisiamania*, the penis-as-hot-potato dance, did not make me laugh, for although the idea is exaggerated enough, its realization retreats into the realm of good taste. The hurtling about does not go on long enough; the action isn't pushed to its limits for fear that the exuberant energy might turn back on itself, into strain. Honest comedians take that risk, and it is disappointing that Taylor and Ludlam ducked it. It is also disappointing that in Flatchio's great search for a receptacle, something got knocked up but nothing got knocked over. This kind of missing detail reflects the dance's need for doctoring, but it also touches on a larger issue. Even the heartiest ribaldry is a pale cousin of proper cockie-doody-ism. Paying homage to smut, the collaborators forgot about silliness, and there went the real joy of the episode. Silliness does crop up here and there—in the clunkily jazzed-up Bach to which the snake charmer genteelly bumps and swivels, in the shiny yellow dish-detergent bottle from which the characters drink the potent formula, and in the shiny red dish-detergent bottle whose stuff quells what the yellow bottle did. One is grateful for that clarification between uppers and downers, but the truth is, the scenario is not confused enough, nor does it whiz by in a giddy enough blur to warrant such visual aids. It's a

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nice touch but finally gratuitous. We are back to charm again.

Charm is one of Taylor's great gifts. His habit of dismantling taboo topics with it might be considered a unique gift. *Dust,* which Taylor made last spring and which was performed again during his company's week-long season at the Academy, turns crippled and other horrendously afflicted individuals into whimsical silhouettes. In *Big Bertha,* incest is choreographed as sloppy movement; it is thus defined as sloppy behavior. I find that definition charming. In *Churchyard* the clerics' final orgy is made charming by references to mythological beasts. In other dances Taylor cannot resist injecting a bit of scandal into unforbidden topics. Eve sheds no tears upon leaving Eden, especially when learning that she can't have Jake the snake. *So Long, Eden,* it's called, and the tone of the title pretty much describes the tone of the dance. The wedding ceremony in *Orbs* concludes with food being thrown about. The charm of all these dances, and the several more not mentioned here, is discovered in their restraint. The tone is sleight of hand; formal qualities are always paramount. Even the possibly farcical wedding scene in *Orbs* is kept under check by its strict observance of musical meter; the roast is tossed about, as I remember it, in note-for-note accordance with a Beethoven quartet. So it is no surprise that Taylor should take on crotches in *Aphrodisiamania,* and that he should couch the topic in baroque music (called for this occasion, *Golden Oldies of the Renaissance*). His joining up with Ludlam, however, committed him to a forthright comedy from which his other dances have shied.

Or rather, one had not thought to think of those dances as shying away from anything until *Aphrodisiamania* came along and showed us a Taylor unwilling to extend twits into burlesque. To criticize this dance for not being as Chaucerian as Chaucer is unfair, I guess, but to complain that it does not appease in some way the infantile lusts it sets going in everybody seems to me a just criticism. Yet the main target of criticism must be the collaborative process. All it did was show a normally self-confident artist ankle deep in someone else's bag. (Fans of Ludlam could well say the same thing.) As for the *commedia,* I wish that Taylor, Ludlam and everyone else fooling around with low comedy would keep the *commedia* out of it. At this point its reputation needs to be saved too.

It was with relief as well as pleasure that *Aphrodisiamania* was followed by a dance of wholehearted exuberance, *Esplanade.* All the dancers were as good as they could be in both works, and so it is a measure of the worth of the dances rather than the dancers when I note that while Carolyn Adams was appropriately radiant as the virgin in *Aphrodisiamania,* she was provocatively radiant as the chief runner and tumbler in *Esplanade.* On this occasion she reminded me of what it was like to watch the recovery of the baby who falls out of the window in *Small Change.* After briefly marveling at danger overcome, one bathes in the sheer joy of the action itself.

The relief-pleasure sensation experienced at this Paul Taylor concert is always doubled in spades at the New York City Ballet. One collapses at its doorstep—fatigued by Laura Dean's ungainly two-steps, by Lucinda Childs's dogged insistence that dancing equals walking, and by other choreographers who know that dancing is not walking but don't quite know what dancing *is*—and one comes out of the theatre feeling just swell.

The opening of the City Ballet's winter season is also a teaser, because repertory is dropped after only two weeks for a month of *The Nutcracker.* Not until January is real business resumed. The two weeks of repertory just ended were more teasing than usual. On opening night, November 15, two works that will be officially premièred in January were previewed. This benefit performance was not arranged to give any of the excerpts and complete works comprising the program their due, but one can easily see that both George Balanchine's *Ballo della Regina* and Peter Martins's *Calcium Light Night* are very fine and probably much more, each in its own way. The first two weeks brought newly promoted principal Merrill Ashley into roles that, by virtues of their choreography and the frequency with which she got to perform them, should enable her to make the transition from superb technician to interesting woman. Whether she will make the transition remains to be seen, and that is another reason why the first stretch was more teasing than usual.

On the other hand, a ballet that previously had been just short of total success became a resounding one. *Bournonville Divertissements,* first done last February, now ends with a jolly ensemble tarantella from *Napoli* instead of the *pas de sept* from *A Folk Tale.* The *pas de sept* has its interests, but in too innocuous a form to serve as curtain descender. Moreover, the dancers in all the excerpts are better than they were. Put that together with the new ending

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INDIGENOUS GIFTS / Nat Hentoff

As befits the ecumenical spirit of this column, and indeed the season, the following gift suggestions range fairly widely, though always indigenously. (All are within the normal LP price range.)

Barry Altschul: *You Can't Name Your Own Tune.* (Muse.) A nearly ideal introduction to the newer jazz—daring but quickly assimilable, abundant in lyricism and wit, with such influential tribunes of the current wave as Sam Rivers, Muhal Richard Abrams, Dave Holland and George Lewis.

Lester Young: *The Lester Young Story, Volumes 1 to 3*, available separately. (Columbia.) Perhaps the most persistently inventive and certainly the most graceful of all jazz improvisers, Lester Young has been well served by this model reissue project, which was produced by John Hammond and Michael Brooks. There is much Billie Holiday and Count Basie, among other nonpareil colleagues of Prez—as Billie Holiday named him.

Booker Little: *Victory and Sorrow.* (Bethlehem.) Only 23 when he died in 1961, trumpeter-composer Booker Little had already achieved remarkable stature among his fellow musicians. His playing and writing were a rare fusion of passion and disciplined, thoughtful structure. Finally available again, this was Little's last album. It will be instructive to those who persist in equating "serious music" only with classical music.

Randy Newman: *Little Criminals.* (Warner Brothers.) The most mordant, original, disturbing and yet oddly buoyant of our native Pop *chansonniers*, Newman is as much a short-short story writer as he is a composer. And no one in all of popular music is able to create so diversified a spectrum of utterly distinctive characters—from inhabitants of the netherworld of cities to a Texas girl at her father's funeral.

James Talley: *Ain't It Somethin'.* (Capitol.) With roots in Woody Guthrie and James Agee, among many other elements of the American grain, Talley is a Populist (the anti-corporate, not the Carter kind). He is also a chronicler of love and the weather, as well as of working people's lives, and there is no one at all like him in what can loosely be called the country-Pop field.

Merle Haggard: *A Working Man Can't Get Nowhere Today.* (Capitol.) Grittier than Tally, Haggard is also leaner in his imagery. That is, his records are more likely to be played on jukeboxes at Alabama truck stops. Haggard is a master of white country blues, along with the genre that can be called loners' love songs. ("I was born the running kind, with leaving always on my mind.")

Ann Peebles: *If This Is Heaven.* (Cream.) While it is true that black and white sounds have increasingly intertwined in present Pop music, there is still a very lively tradition of unmistakably black "soul music" (what used to be called rhythm and blues). Ann Peebles is the most resilient, cracklingly exciting and yet also thoughtful of the "soul" storytellers, and this is her best album so far. It offers solid tales for her to build on and a sharp, swinging Memphis band.

Maddy Prior & June Tabor: *Silly Sisters.* (Chrysalis.) Music for the collector who has everything, but probably missed this one. The most unexpected and literally thrilling vocal album of the year. Prior is a British folk-rock luminary (Steeleye Span) and Tabor is a librarian, almost wholly unknown to music audiences. They combine in a continually evocative program of traditional songs (from *The Lass of Loch Royal* to *My Husband's Got No Courage in Him*), and their singing—sometimes unaccompanied—is of extraordinary and bold dramatic intensity while also capable of intimate sensuousness.

Joan Armatrading: *Show Some Emotion.* (A&M.) A short, slight, powerfully expressive native of the West Indies who grew up in Birmingham, England, Armatrading has developed into an unusually arresting singer-composer. Though there are elements of rock, West Indian cadences, and some jazz in her work, it resists categorization. Like Randy Newman, she creates epiphanies—moments in which a whole life is revealed in a gesture or through a reactive attitude. This is done with a crisp sense of dynamics and swift curves of time that make her satisfyingly unpredictable.

Zoot Sims: *Hawthorne Nights.* (Pablo.) Tenor saxophonist Zoot Sims has long been known as a natural swinger, but this is the most stimulating framework he has yet had in which to celebrate his exhilarating jazz time. The arrangements are by Bill Holman and they are flawless illustrations of the kind of lithe, spacious support best suited for such quintessential mainstream jazz improvisers as Sims. This set is a perpetual holiday. □

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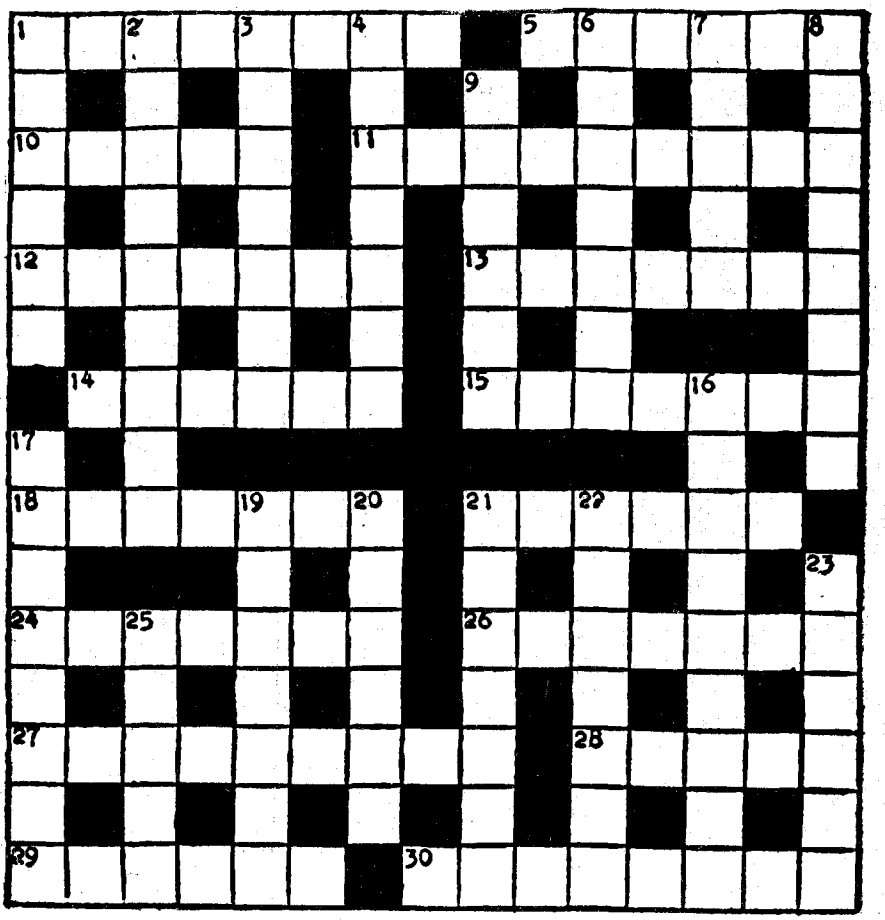

ACROSS

1 and 5 across One called in emergencies has problems with an owl, perhaps. (14)
10 Sound as a bell. (5)
11 Washington's tree might have been, after being cut down. (7,2)
12 Draws up some sort of direction. (7)
13 It comes from the islands of Langerhans. (7)
14 Was their association with stupidity just a put-on? (6)
15 One giving the party has a time with the pledge, if human. (7)
18 The play may be announced in them, but not for the public's benefit. (7)
21 and 9 down Dual nationality for something that might go on the table. (6,6)
24 Possibly rulers don't have the right slant to us, looking back on it. (7)
26 *De trop*'s not quite the word for it! (What one does with undesirables makes sense.) (7)
27 If you see a woman talk a little, you'll recognize the agent there. (9)
28 It means more money in the opera is expected. (5)
29 and 30 One wouldn't, in England, with the Tories out of office. (4,2,3,5)

DOWN

1 and 17 Too big for your britches? You won't have to, unless fine coal has to be carried. (4,2,3,5)
2 Watch—it shouldn't be where the bandage is placed! (9)
3 A warrior's belt doesn't have any hair and is ¾ grain. (7)
4 Cuts out taxes. (7)
6 Is against short work attitudes? (7)
7 Flowing and ebbing. (5)
8 Regretted being shut up in a music pipe. (8)
9 See 21 across
16 In correspondence with other than DC wiring? (9)
17 See 1 down
19 A small tract in the meadow to the left, sort of. (7)
20 Squares might recognize the direction, though it sounds like something you should smell. (7)
21 Put two and two together in the course of what might be crazy, in a sense. (7)
22 Jones was on the stage. (7)
23 Lay claim to a lock-up? (6)
25 Turner, as seen by the French and the English. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1706

ACROSS: 1 and 4 Agatha Christie; 10 Session; 11 Approve; 12 Ramps; 14 Libel; 15 Cedar; 17 Narrated; 21 Vanguard; 23 Raced; 26 Orris; 28 and 25 Hoi polloi; 29 Canna; 30 Lodging; 31 and 33 Hercule Poirot; 32 Idealist. DOWN: 1 Abstract; 2 Assumed; 3 Heirs; 5 and 7 Heart trouble; 6 Impel; 8 Evenly; 9 Insomnia; 16 and 13 Ragout; 18 Red light; 19 Air; 20 Adjacent; 22 Abridge; 24 Conquer; 27 Spill; 28 Highs; 29 Cargo.

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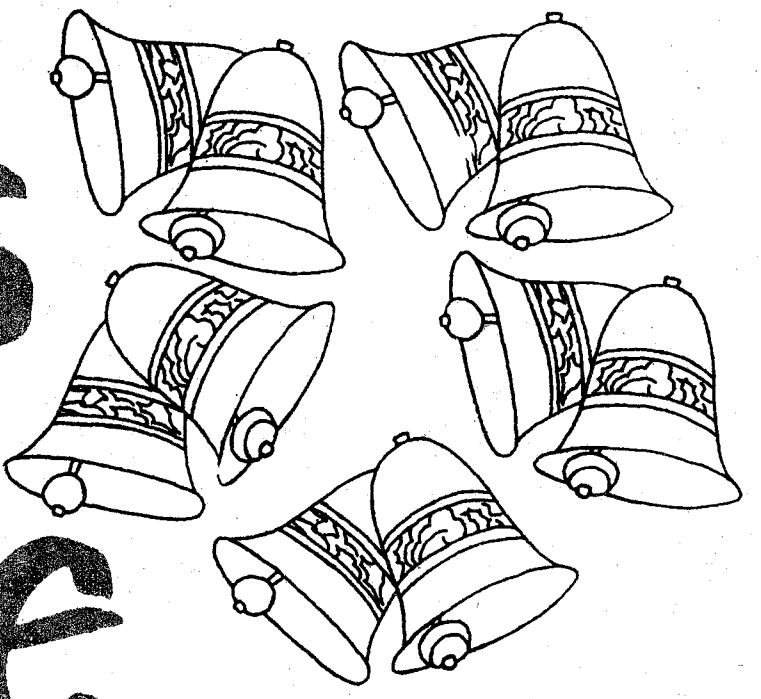

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